Murder in the Mines *by Ed Falkowski*

NEW MASSES

FIFTEEN CENTS

July 30, 1940

FDR's Convention
by Adam Lapin

Hitler's French Quartet
by Philippe Deval

Plot against the Ballot
by James Morison

Someday Soon, Mrs. Benti
by Ruth McKenney

BRUCE MINTON, GROPPER, F. J. WALLACE, ALVAH BESSIE, RICHTER

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Between Ourselves

SOMEONE asked us to explain how we were able to impart that whimsical something into these columns. "It's a world crisis," our chider said, "why not make NM readers feel that as soon as they turn to page 2?" Well, now, we blushed at the idea of Between Ourselves making anyone feel the impact of anything in this weather, and we also wondered whether a world crisis can be analyzed in eight-point type.

However, we were somewhat ashamed of our recent excursions reported herein. The world has been burning with the fires of war and the summer heat while we have been off weekends, giving our readers the impression that your correspondent is an escapist perpetually gallivanting around the countryside while the others on the staff grapple with the rest of the book.

Fact is, the quietest moment of the last week and the coolest, so far as we are concerned, took place on Wednesday afternoon. In the company of two other staff members, we took refuge in an air-cooled restaurant and indulged in a two-hour mid-day meal. Nothing was supposed to come out of that luncheon except some chatter about the collapse of the Yankees and Henry Armstrong's niche in the pugilistic hall of fame. But the restaurant is frequented by newspapermen and we were obliged to talk shop.

The visitor who joined our table was a friend of NM's, a writer for the slicks, and he fairly leaped upon the three NM refugees. "I now work on a sheet which prepares wine lists for burghers and runs departments about ceramics and toy pups. I don't ask you to delve into the decadence of Peloponnesian art in the third century BC, but it does seem to me that you should devote more space to cultural subjects." One of us asked just what he meant.

"What I mean is—I'd like to know what effect depression, crisis, war, revolution are having upon the popular arts, the household arts, the folkways of the people," he insisted. We sipped lemonade as he told us that NM's duty is to convert Sights and Sounds into a broader record of cultural responses. What, for example, is happening in architecture, education, philosophy, psychology? What is the world cataclysm doing to women, to marriage? NM, we agreed, has published little on certain cultural phases of the social scene which require record and discussion. One reason has sometimes been lack of space—although we have found room for many articles on health, genetics, literature, art, music, and the theater. The chief obstacle, however, has been our own failure to press those of our many readers who are able to contribute such articles; this we now do. If you feel you can broaden the scope of NM's subject matter, NM would like to hear from you. If you cannot contribute, perhaps you can give NM the benefit of your research, or of your ideas. We'd like both to satisfy our luncheon friend and to give NM that added stature which the regular publication of such articles would create.

Apropos of James Morison's recent piece on the WPA purge of Communists, Darwin J. Meserole commends the article and adds: "Mr. Morison states that the Emergency *Relief Appropriation Act*, fiscal year 1941 (House Joint Resolution 544), 'bars relief to aliens and members of the Communist Party.' . . . The wording of the act on this point is (Section 15f): 'No alien, no Communist, and no member of any Nazi Bund organization shall be given employment or continued in employment on any work project.' . . . It will be noted that the act does not say 'members of the Communist Party,' but 'no alien, no Communist, etc.' . . . To illustrate: A person may be 'a Communist' who is a member of the Communist Party; or if he is in sympathy with, or supports by written or spoken word, the present government of Russia; or if he believes in a socialist system of society —for the objectives and fundamental principles of Communism and socialism are virtually the same; and the dictionary definitions are very similar; and lastly, if he is of a religious turn of mind and should express sympathy with, or approval of, the communal life of the followers of Christ in the Early Church of the first century—a life described as 'having all things in common.' These examples do not exhaust the possible definition of 'a Communist,' but they are sufficient to indicate the illegality of the sections of the statute in question."

Note to Naomi Ward: Your article on domestic workers has brought you many letters. We should like to forward this mail but we do not have your address. This is to ask you please to write or call. The letters may contain job offers.

The idea of lawn parties for NM is spreading. Following our note on that Westport frolic comes a courier from Croton with news of a binge at 110 Old Post Road North, Croton-on-Hudson, forty minutes from the city, on Saturday evening, July 27. Dancing and entertainment.

As for the evening of August 2—you and we and the rest of the staff will spend it at the Lido Pool, 160 West 146th St., N. Y., for NM's Swingswim, with its dancing, bathing, and beauty contest. You can get your tickets now for 65 cents each, including a locker, by writing or visiting NM, 461 Fourth Ave., or at Bookfair, 133 West 44th St., or at the Workers' Bookshop, 50 East 13th St. You'll find more details on page 22.

And one last word—and a pleasant one. Albert Maltz's *The Underground Stream* is to appear serially in the *Daily Worker*, beginning July 28. We stayed up until three the other morning in order to finish this outstanding proletarian novel. We're glad those who cannot afford to buy the book will now be able to read it.

Zero Hour Postscript: Word has just come in by cable that R. Palme Dutt, editor of the London *Labour Monthly*, is preparing two articles for NM on the European picture. There is no need to tell you that Dutt is one of the world's ablest political writers and that his articles will be of first rate importance. Watch NM carefully for the first story, perhaps in next week's issue.

Who's Who

ADAM LAPIN is NM and *Daily Worker* correspondent in Washington. . . . Philippe Deval is a French journalist who has contributed to NM before. . . . James Morison is a free lance labor journalist and a regular contributor to these pages. . . . Ed Falkowski, a former coal miner of Pennsylvania, has written for other magazines. . . . Bruce Minton is co-author with John Stuart of *Men Who Lead Labor* and the recently published book, *The Fat Years and the Lean*. . . . Frank J. Wallace is a New York economist and writer. . . . Lou Cooper is a New York composer and pianist.

Flashbacks

JUST in case you hadn't noticed it, the blitzkrieg stage in the struggle between the German and British empires may begin on the anniversary of the beginning of World War I. Austria-Hungary and Serbia were at war on July 28, 1914; Germany declared war on Russia August 1. . . . Fascism, which has finally been imposed on a disunited French people from above and from abroad, was dealt a serious blow when the French Socialist and Communist parties signed the People's Front pact, July 27, 1934. . . . Another heroic episode in the people's resistance to fascism took place July 26, 1938. That day Spanish loyalists crossed the Ebro, capturing many towns in a sudden counteroffensive. . . . William H. Sylvis, one of the first great leaders of the American working class, died July 27, 1869. . . . Many embattled Englishmen may recall that July 31 is the anniversary of a political party, which, had it been listened to, could have staved off disaster. This week in 1920 the Communist Party of Great Britain was organized.

This Week

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NEW MASSES

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FDR Drafts Roosevelt

Hague, Kelly, and Crump help pull the strings at the Chicago puppet show. The Democratic convention tips its hat to peace. A firsthand account by Adam Lapin.

Chicago.

THE stream of distinguished visitors to Suite 308 in the Blackstone Hotel was practically endless. The rooms had originally been reserved for the private use of Mayor Ed Kelly, but the Chicago boss turned them over to Harry Hopkins. And it was there that Hopkins transmitted the orders which he received at regular and frequent intervals from the White House. It was there that Senators Byrnes, Barkley, and Wagner received the word on what was what in regard to platform. There the news was passed out that the President's message to the convention revealing his intentions at long last would be the signal for a third-term "draft" movement. And there Mayor Hague was informed that his boys must get behind Henry Wallace.

Certainly the President's lieutenants carried out their orders faithfully. Hopkins was a loyal personal representative. Byrnes was an able and skillful floor manager and strategist. Kelly and Hague came through with the sizable votes of their state delegations at crucial moments. And so did most of the other political bosses at the convention. Ed Crump delivered Tennessee's twenty-two votes on the nose for Wallace, and Joe Guffey held sixty-eight out of Pennsylvania's seventy-two votes in line on that hot night when the President's running mate was picked.

TOO MUCH EFFICIENCY

Everything was managed efficiently. A little too efficiently, it is true. There were complaints that Hopkins was autocratic. He antagonized many of the professional politicians who didn't like an amateur horning in on their business. But, of course, it wasn't Hopkins' fault that he only received word about Wallace on Thursday morning, and that there was no chance even for a pretense of a buildup for the candidate. The important orders all came from the President. It was partly out of resentment against the cut-and-dried character of the convention—only partly, because of other differences within the Democratic Party—that the protest against Wallace reached such intensity and anger.

The Republicans will no doubt try to make the most of the inner-party difficulties of the Democrats; the lack of party harmony may even have an effect on the President's chances in November. But the backbiting antagonisms at Chicago are by no means the real explanation for the essential hollowness of all the smashing victories which the President won. After all, the Democratic Party gained strength in 1936 when Al Smith and other Liberty Leaguers took a walk. Defections then served to point up the President's case as the candidate of the common people.

What was lacking in Chicago was the feeling that behind the President stood a great popular army ready to follow and support him. That was why machine politics had to be used to such an extent by the President's lieutenants. Last September there went out the spark which would have imparted enthusiasm to the galleries in Chicago and to great mass meetings throughout the country. The spark went out when the war started, and the President turned away from the New Deal policies which had given him his tremendous popular victory in 1936. But the President managed to adjust himself quickly to the new situation. With the slogans of national defense and national unity and with a strong pro-Allied policy, he made new friends and new alignments. And it seemed not at all impossible a few weeks ago that the President would ride into office for a third term with the backing of the newspapers and the Wall Street interests which had fought him so bitterly. Then history played one of its little tricks. The collapse of France was a heavy political blow to Roosevelt. The European situation began to enter a new and as yet uncertain phase. Appeasement again began to loom as a possibility. And if it is appeasement that American business wants, Willkie is certainly better suited to talk things over with Hitler. He is less committed on foreign policy than Roosevelt.

With the outbreak of the war the President sacrificed the issue of social reform which had been the dynamic starting point of the third-term movement. With the defeat of the French, the foreign policy issue which might have helped put him across with wide business and press support was badly shaken.

The very sameness of the platforms adopted by the Republicans and the Democrats is a source of weakness for Roosevelt. Many voters may feel that if they are going to get pretty much of the same thing in either event they might as well take a chance and try a new man. What the President needed to achieve victory in November over the obstacle of the third-term question was a great compelling issue. The convention made it plain that this was something FDR no longer has.

On foreign policy the two platforms are practically identical, as has already been pointed out by the New York *Times,* the New York *Sun,* and other mouthpieces of reaction. If anything, the Democrats went a little stronger in trying to cash in on the peace sentiment of the country. Held in check by those Wall Street boys who wanted support for the Allies, the Republicans were afraid to make a definite pledge against sending another AEF across the ocean. They simply stated that they were "firmly opposed to involving this nation in foreign war." The President cleverly seized on this in his last defense message to Congress. But the Democratic platform went to town with a resounding pledge not to "send our army, navy, or air forces to fight in foreign lands outside of the Americas." Of course, the additional phrase, "except in case of attack," gives the Administration an out in case one is needed.

RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT

Gov. Herbert Lehman and other strong supporters of the President's foreign policy felt at one point that the platform writers were selling Roosevelt down the river. Lehman buzzed around urging a more precise pledge of aid to the British. Secretary Wallace and Senator Pepper proposed this type of plank to the platform committee, which overwhelmingly turned it down. It is true that the isolationist group led by Senator Wheeler was in a fairly strong position on the drafting committee, particularly in view of their threat to bring up the third-term resolution on the floor. But then, the President's supporters were in an even stronger position. It was Senator Wagner as chairman of the resolutions committee who appointed the members of the platform drafting committee. He was under no compulsion to name the isolationists. Wagner would have been able to force through a stronger foreign-policy plank if this was what the President had wanted. But Roosevelt apparently decided it would be good politics to be flexible and give lip service to the peace sentiment of the people. After all, a platform is a relatively unimportant document anyway. Even if there was nothing about conscription in the platform, the President could still advocate it in his acceptance speech to the convention. Even if the drafting committee turned thumbs down on the proposals of Senator Pepper, there was nothing to prevent the President from using practically identical language, according to members of the committee, in that same acceptance speech.

On the domestic side the Democrats went

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in a little more for promises than the Republicans who mostly offered large gobs of economy-in-government-expenditures. The Democrats pointed with pride to the achievements of the New Deal, and pledged more of the same. They made much of the power issue, and pointed an accusing finger at candidate Willkie. As for their pledges to expand the public housing program, the public health program, and to increase farm payments, these happen to be precisely the services that have been hardest hit by the Roosevelt armaments program. The Republicans decided to make a bit more of a bid for the Negro vote (with a promise of "universal suffrage") than the Democrats, who after all can't afford to play around, even in campaign platforms, with pledges to grant the vote to the Negroes of the South. Both party platforms contained the same vague phrases about suppressing the "fifth column," the same implied, but none the less ominous, threats to civil liberties.

It was Speaker Bankhead who suggested, in his keynote address, that the coming campaign be pitched on the level of "some legitimate banter and the discussion of records of the two parties." Thus far it appears that his words will be heeded. The banter may not always be "legitimate"; but there will be no basic differences between the two parties. The issue which will feature the campaign will be whether the Democrats or the Republicans can do more to arm the country for war.

It is equally true that the conflicts within the Democratic Party itself are not based on fundamentals. The convention revealed that the groupings in the party are not at present sharply delineated. No one would point with pride to Ed Kelly, Boss Hague, Jimmie Byrnes as leading ideologists of the New Deal. Yet they formed part of the very core of administration leadership and support at the convention. Machine politicians felt that the President had to run again if they were to remain in power, and the President needed the machine politicians. But on the other hand, Jim Farley and other old-line politicos resented the fact that they had been pushed out of the picture by Harry Hopkins. The basis for their opposition at the convention was partly personal, partly political. In any event, the resignation of Farley as National Committee chairman, scheduled to take effect soon, was a heavy blow to the President. Farley and his supporters formed an important part of the group which raised hell at the Chicago Stadium last Thursday night.

SOUTHERN TORIES

Then there were the old-line Southern tories. Not all the scars of the former New Deal–tory conflict have been healed. Certain hangovers remain. It is true that the Southern reactionaries at the convention did not represent a wholly united bloc. They were split on the Wallace issue, a large majority lining up behind Bankhead and against Wallace. The Southern politicians have certain minor differences with the administration boys in Washington. For example, they agree with the President that conscription is needed; but they would like to see it run by the army and they are suspicious of Harry Hopkins' notions about training camps for the youth. Some of them feel that the camps might impart "radical" ideas to the young.

Finally, in the opposition movement, which assumed such dramatic form during the vice presidential fight, there were quite a few Willkie supporters. Willkie's farflung Commonwealth & Southern empire has given him real political influence in the Democratic Party of the South. There were many delegates from Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma who were either open or undercover Willkie men. Leader of the Willkie forces at the convention was Guy Warren, Texas delegate and oil operator, who played briefly with the idea of running a couple of trainloads of delegates from the convention to the big Willkie meeting at Elwood. Of course, the Willkie supporters cannot be considered as a distinct group. The dividing line between the Southern Garner men and the Southern Willkie men is sometimes difficult to determine.

Plain people were as rare in Chicago as they had been in Philadelphia. Negro delegates, few as they were at the Republican convention, were even fewer in Chicago. On the other hand, the Democrats had more labor representatives. AFL officials were so closely integrated with the regular machines as to be indistinguishable. Although the CIO delegates jumped on the Roosevelt bandwagon without reservation, they more or less maintained their own identity. The CIO delegates, mostly from the steel and mine unions in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, issued a statement on the Saturday before the convention started pledging support for a third term. But apparently the Democratic National Committee was not too anxious to publicize CIO support; the committee did practically nothing to distribute the statement, with the result that some newspapers got it a day late and others didn't get it at all.

The decision of the CIO delegates, led by Philip Murray and Thomas Kennedy, to support Roosevelt for a third term was described by many commentators as the political eclipse of John L. Lewis. It is perfectly true that Lewis' critical attitude toward the administration and his demand for what could have developed into a third party are now, temporarily at least, minority views in the CIO high command. But close advisers of the CIO head deny that he has been repudiated or that he will long remain in a minority on political issues. During Lewis' brief stay in Chicago he was seen serenely strolling down broad, spacious Michigan Avenue. His lieutenants think they know why he did not appear disturbed or worried. They feel they know where he is going and what he is doing. They put it this way.

Most American workers still separate the political and economic struggle. Militant trade unionism and militant political activity do not yet appear synonymous to them. For a brief period during the 1936 campaign the two seemed alike. Later the gap reappeared. Lewis remains the undisputed leader of the CIO in the trade union field. Phil Murray and Tom Kennedy recognize this as well as the auto union leaders who voted in Chicago for a third term; above all, the rank and file still look to him as their leader. Lewis himself recognized the apparent gap between the political and the economic and did not attempt forcibly to put across his views concerning the administration or the need for a third party. He did not try to pressure Murray or Kennedy. He never asked them to come out against Roosevelt.

THE GAP CLOSES

But, Lewis' advisers continue, the seeming gap between the political and the economic will close sooner or later. It is beginning to close now. And it will continue closing as the administration's armaments program affects trade union standards. What will the aluminum workers think when the Mellon-owned Aluminum Co. of America, with its $36,000,000 in profits last year, refuses to grant them the meager 10-cent-an-hour wage increase which they demanded? What will be their judgment of the administration and of its defense council, which includes Sidney Hillman among its distinguished members, for forcing them to take only 2 cents an hour? The labor movement will of necessity come into conflict with the "defense" policies of an administration which offers tremendous profits for big business and places heavy taxes on labor and the consumer. As that conflict matures, Lewis will again receive recognition as the political leader of the CIO as well as of broader segments of the labor movement and the people.

Lewis' recent statements confirm this analysis of his views as outlined by his advisers. In a lengthy legislative report sent to CIO unions just as the Chicago convention was closing, he urged that they "fight off anti-labor laws and fight for progressive legislation." Then he launched a stinging attack on the administration's refusal to bar government contracts from firms which violate the Wagner act. "Under the urge of a declared emergency, the government is making patriotism profitable for American finance and industry," Lewis declared. "Surely it is not too much to expect of government that it will also protect the inherent and statutory rights of labor to organize and bargain collectively." It is not necessary to approve all Lewis' tactical moves, such as his recent pat-on-the-back for Herbert Hoover, to recognize the essential soundness and far-sightedness of the position he has taken. Under the impact of their daily experiences the workers of the country will more and more appreciate the truth in his criticism of the Roosevelt administration and see the need for a new third party, a genuine peace party. The two major party conventions have left labor and the common people with no other alternative.

ADAM LAPIN.

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Four Musketeers of Betrayal

Petain the mercenary marshal, Weygand the hooded general, Laval the parvenu premier, and the anti-Semite Marquet. An unholy quartet who rule France for Hitler.

Lisbon, Portugal.

Two clerico-fascist generals and two former Socialists today direct the destiny of France. Disowned by the French people, this clique of generals and corrupt politicians has surrendered the freedom of France and her people to Hitler and is now trying to build a fascist dictatorship in a country which only a year ago celebrated the 150th anniversary of the fall of the Bastille.

The Hindenburg of France, Marshal Petain, has for many years secretly supported the fascist leagues and groups which on Feb. 6, 1934, made their first unsuccessful attempt to put an end to the Third Republic. They called him "the hero of Verdun." Whenever they talked of a strong man who could save France, it was Petain's name which was put forward. It was not because of Verdun that the two hundred families looked upon Petain as their savior. Bourgeois historians still dispute who really saved Verdun, whether it was Petain or General Nivelle or a deputy who, returning from Verdun, told the Chamber in 1916 about the disorganization at the front, the incompetence of France's military leaders and the real feeling of the French soldiers and peasants. (None of them seems to remember that it was the people of France who formed a living wall around Verdun and who paid for this defense with nearly one million lives.)

But undisputed is Petain's achievement in crushing the great mutiny of 1917. Bled white by the foolish tactics of the French General Staff, which had sent the French Army into numerous useless offensives, driven to despair by the incompetence of the leading commanders and an appalling lack of organization, regiments from eight different army corps decided in 1917 to march on Paris and put an end to the disastrous rule of corrupt politicians and bungling generals. It was a spontaneous movement. The soldiers at the front simply felt that something had to be done to end the imperialist war and to oust the old political and military leaders. It was Petain who was sent to put down this revolt. He used colonial troops, who were misinformed about the real intentions of the revolting soldiers, in order to halt the march on Paris. Every tenth man in every regiment that participated in the mutiny was shot. Thousands of honest French soldiers and peasants were sent to death by Petain. That "victory" brought him the rank of marshal.

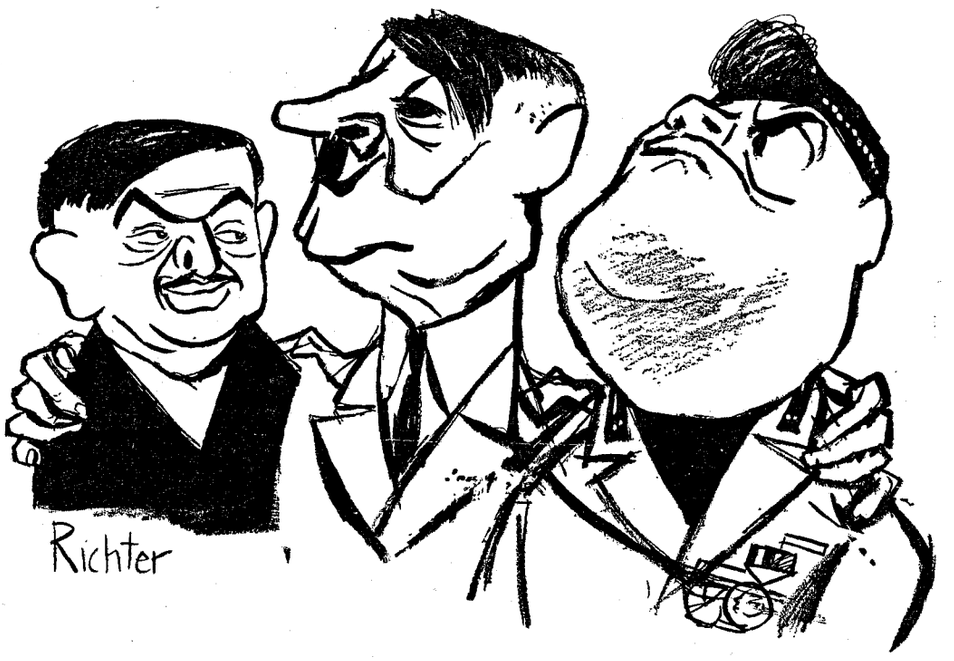
This hater of labor and all progressive movements ruled the French Army with an iron hand till 1931. While he did little to perfect the mechanical equipment of the French troops, he did a great deal to instill an anti-democratic spirit in the French officer corps. Coming himself from Saint-Cyr, where the elite of French officers were bred and educated in an anti-republican spirit, Petain threw his weight in the scales to overthrow governments which were not fashioned to his taste. In 1926 it was Petain who finally persuaded Doumergue to call Poincare back to power, although the people in the elections of 1924 had voted against reaction. In 1934, not quite two years after another electoral victory of the left, it was under the slogan *"Petain au pouvoir"* ("Power to Petain") that the fascists demonstrated on the Place de la Concorde. It was Petain who became minister of war in the Cabinet Doumergue formed to wipe out civil liberties in France. But the heroic fight of the people of Paris on Feb. 9, 1934, the demonstration of 150,000 Communists and Socialists and their supporters in Vincennes on February 12 upset the plans of Doumergue and Petain. Striving with all their might to achieve unity of the labor movement and the progressive forces, the Communists of France erected a barricade against reaction and fascism which all the mercenaries of Marshal Petain and the two hundred families could not break in frontal attack. Only after Daladier and Blum had successfully engineered their fifth column work inside the labor and progressive forces did France fall victim to Hitler and Petain.

The marshal was one of the architects of appeasement. He spared no efforts to wreck the Franco-Soviet mutual assistance pact, which could have saved peace and averted France's present catastrophe. In an interview given on April 30, 1936, to one of the big business newspapers, *Le Journal,* Petain denounced Communism as the mortal enemy of European civilization, praised Colonel de la Rocque, leader of the fascist Croix de Feu, and declared: "I believe that the Franco-Soviet treaty does us very bad service." In a memorandum sent to big industrialists and reactionary politicians Petain staked his honor on his conviction "that Russia is unable to make a really great military effort and to stand a war, even for only six months."

Petain was the main lobbyist for General Franco in French governmental circles. He personally guaranteed "Franco's peaceful and friendly intentions toward France." He denied that the Spanish fascists were under the influence of Hitler and Mussolini. He covered with his prestige the slanderous campaign of the French paid press against the Spanish People's Front.

In the first documents about the conspiracy of the fascist Cagoulards which fell into the hands of the police, Petain's name was prominently mentioned as the leader behind the scenes. Leon Blum and his minister of the interior, Marx Dormoy, obedient to the wishes of the two hundred families, prevented his name from being mentioned "to save the honor of the hero of Verdun."

After successfully collaborating with Daladier and Blum, Chamberlain and Citrine in the assassination of the Spanish republic,



Mischa Richter

"Some of my best friends were Socialists."

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Petain went as first French ambassador to Franco Spain. On his arrival he was greeted with special warmth by Hitler's ambassador, Baron von Stohrer. Their friendly relations were not severed by the war. Petain remained in Spain until the middle of May 1940, and through Baron von Stohrer maintained contact with Hitler. The French Embassy was one of the centers of fascist conspiracy against the Third Republic.

Recalled by Paul Reynaud to become vice premier of France, Petain at the first Cabinet meeting proposed surrender to Hitler. He established immediate contact with Pierre Laval. These two worked on President Lebrun, demanding that he dismiss the Reynaud Cabinet and place in power a group of men who could come to an agreement with Hitler. Petain was seconded in his efforts by the commander in chief, General Maxime Weygand, Minister of Information Prouvot, and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Paul Baudouin. All three had been given their posts by Reynaud. At that moment, when Hitler's tanks had smashed through at Sedan, only a people's government could have saved France. Rather than let the destiny of France be directed by men of the people, Reynaud preferred to call in prominent fascists and thus to hand over France to Hitler. When Reynaud became premier, the controlled French press and the foreign correspondents called him "another Clemenceau." He proved to be another Daladier.

General Maxime Weygand, closest adviser of Petain, had built his reputation on the legend that he was a "part of Foch." At the beginning of the World War, he had commanded a very exclusive cavalry regiment and had then been appointed, at Joffre's recommendation, chief of staff to Marshal Foch. In this capacity he served throughout the war. If he really was a "part of Foch," then he must have been part of Foch's unscrupulous offensive theory that discounted the effect of machine guns and artillery and sent hundreds of thousands of soldiers into the bloodiest and most senseless attacks of the World War. That human lives were of no value to him Weygand proved when he repressed a revolt in Syria after the war. He was especially dear to the two hundred families of France because he commanded the Polish Army during the Soviet-Polish war in 1920. It was not for his outstanding military qualities, but for his anti-Bolshevism that he was chosen in 1931 to succeed Petain at the head of the French Army. He held this post till 1935. There is not the slightest evidence that he had sought to modernize French equipment or French tactics. Like Petain before him and Gamelin after him, Weygand's military conception was based on the experience of 1914-18. Unable to foresee the preponderant role which mechanization would play in the next war, Weygand believed in offensive tactics only against the "internal enemy." For an attack from outside he thought France well protected by the Maginot Line.

It was against the "internal enemy," against Communism, that Weygand concentrated his main efforts after the first war. He was the patron of the Patriotic Youth, which a wealthy deputy of Paris financed as mercenary troops against the Communists. A Catholic, whom Clemenceau had described as "being completely under the influence of the Church," Weygand was an active member of a social group in Paris which had connections with the royalist pretender, the duke of Guise, with the former king of Spain, the former Empress Zita of Austria, and the Vatican. And like Petain, he was involved in the Cagoulard conspiracy.

Weygand too was an opponent of the Franco-Soviet pact. Shortly after its conclusion he sent word to the French newspapers that he opposed it. He wrote several anonymous articles for *Le Temps* to prove the inferiority of the Red Army. When he retired in 1935 as inspector general of the French Army, the two hundred families made him one of the directors of the Suez Canal Company, paying him 200,000 francs a year for services rendered. At the outbreak of the second imperialist war Daladier made him commander in chief of the Allied Army in the Near East, which had been assigned the task of attacking the Soviet Union. Weygand from the first favored surrender to Hitler. At the final meeting of the Reynaud Cabinet he tried to win over the few ministers who opposed surrender with the tale that the army was needed against the Communists who had organized an uprising in Paris and installed their leader, Maurice Thorez, in the presidential palace.

When the French negotiators left for Compiegne, they were instructed upon the insistance of Weygand not to demand the return of the two million French prisoners who had fallen into Hitler's hands. Weygand was afraid that the workers and peasants in uniform, whom he and his ilk had led to disaster, would tell the country the truth and sweep the Petain government away. Hitler understood. And so these two million sons of the French people must languish in Nazi prison camps for the sake of the Petain government.

Pierre Laval and Adrien Marquet, two Socialist renegades, are the political brains behind the museum piece, Petain. Elected in 1914 as a Socialist deputy to the Chamber, the Auvergnat Pierre Laval sold out the Socialist Party for a Cabinet post. A few years later he, who had entered politics penniless, possessed more than 50,000,000 francs, a chain of newspapers, three beautiful estates, an ancient palace, and last but not least, the confidence of the two hundred families. He married his daughter to a French aristocrat, Count Rene de Chambrun. At the wedding General Pershing acted as best man.

In 1934, when Laval was foreign minister of France, Ribbentrop paid his first visit to Paris. He had a conversation of an hour with Laval at the Quai d'Orsay. No one else was present. At the end of this hour the Saar territory had been sold out. Laval had promised to discourage and demoralize the anti-Hitler forces in the Saar before the plebiscite by refusing to make a declaration that the plebiscite could be repeated after ten years. Two months later he visited Rome. At a dinner party at the French Embassy he met Mussolini and retired with him for a thirty minute conversation in a private room. This half hour sufficed to sell out Ethiopia. Four months later he went to the Soviet Union to sign the Franco-Soviet mutual assistance pact. Negotiations for the pact had been started by Laval's predecessor as foreign minister, Barthou, who was assassinated in November 1934. Laval thought it expedient to go through the motions. But the ink had hardly dried when he met Goering in the Hotel Europe in Warsaw for a conversation which lasted two hours. At the end of these two hours the Franco-Soviet pact was dead.

It took Laval five more years before he could sell out France. I heard him in a hotel lobby in Vichy, unmoved by the French tragedy, explaining to a group of deputies and senators the new "Constitution of France." "Everybody," he said, "must make sacrifices for France." On the same evening I was told by a deputy that the bulk of Laval's fortune was safe in the United States.

Adrien Marquet is the leader of the group of neo-Socialists who left the Socialist Party in December 1933 to fight for "Order, Nation, Authority"—a Hitler slogan. In previous Socialist congresses Marquet had been in the headlines because of his anti-Semitic speeches. Leon Blum was said to be horrified, but did nothing to have Marquet expelled from the Socialist Party. As mayor of Bordeaux, Marquet aroused the resentment of the Socialist rank and file by his arrogance. One day a member of the Socialist Party visited him in the mayor's office and addressed him as "Comrade." Marquet rebuffed him sharply: "Comrade is good enough," he said, "for party conventions. But here I am *Monsieur* Marquet."

Marquet sat as minister of labor in Doumergue's Cabinet together with Petain and Laval. This marked the beginning of the intimate political collaboration of these three sinister men. Marquet was among the outstanding propagandists for General Franco. The super-Munich-man, Bonnet, drew on secret funds to keep Marquet's newspaper in Bordeaux alive. Now he sits in the Petain government as minister of interior to work for "Order, Nation, and Authority." And for Hitler.

Afraid of the popular fury, the Petain government seeks refuge in Paris under the protection of Hitler's army. The unoccupied zone is evidently too unsafe for French fascism. The awakening of the French people may be slow, but it will come. The heirs of the glorious French Revolution, the grandsons of the Communards, the fighters of Saint-Denis, Belleville, and Saint-Antoine will settle accounts with Petain, Weygand, Laval, Marquet, and the rest. And for good.

PHILIPPE DEVAL.

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Strictly Personal
by RUTH McKENNEY

Someday Soon, Mrs. Benti

I MET a refugee last week. She didn't come over first class from Lisbon, complete with eight trunks of jewelry and assorted other knickknacks, and she didn't take the *Clipper*. All the same, she's a refugee.

Her conversation isn't on the same high tone as the stuff thrown around in the Stork Club by the better grade refugees. I talked to her for nearly two hours but she never once mentioned what happened to her stable of race horses and how she saw the duke of Windsor bowling along the road with his duchess sitting beside him, in the snappiest new hat, and bombs falling like hailstones practically within earshot, if you listened hard enough, that is.

Well, as I said, Mrs. Benti (that's not her name, but it will serve) and I had a nice long talk. Mrs. Benti told me how it was in the old country. In the first place, and I think this was heaviest on her heart, her three kids couldn't go to the regular public school. They had to live, of course, in a special section of town, and they couldn't go to the parks or the swimming beaches or things like that. The kids took that pretty hard, especially the swimming, but they were always good kids and Mrs. Benti told them they just had to hold their heads up and not take notice. But the school hurt hard and it kept on hurting and nothing ever helped the ache in Mrs. Benti's heart.

"When they went to school in the morning," she said, "they always sort of drooped. The other kids went past them on bikes and things to the regular public school and my children just watched them. Sometimes the other kids yelled things at them. Once my oldest got mad and hauled off and hit one of them and I had to go out and tell him to stop." Mrs. Benti sighed. "I had to teach them not to fight back. If I hadn't they would have been killed."

When I heard Mrs. Benti say that, I felt sick, sick at heart. Think of a country where the children—the little ones, remember—are taught to treat other kids with savagery that always flirts with death. Consider the problem of a mother who must teach her children to chew on the deadly insult, taste it, savor it, and swallow it. Endlessly. Day after day.

I don't know. I suppose Mrs. Benti isn't as hot news as Mrs. Beck, the wife of the Polish minister who used to chum around with Hitler until his pal doublecrossed him and tossed the knife in his back. Mrs. Beck is a mighty pretty woman and she arrived looking like a million dollars even if she said she'd been through hell, and while Mrs. Benti is graceful and pleasant, I know she hasn't the old ziperoo that would make her a favorite at the Stork Club. Mrs. Benti has been through a lot of harrowing things, including a whale of a lot of floor scrubbing. That shows on your face, unlike Mrs. Beck's variety of hell.

Still, Mrs. Benti has one or two melancholy distinctions that rather put her in a class apart from Mrs. Beck and such. For Mrs. Benti reports that her long exile hasn't exactly ended in Westport, Conn., where the Benti family are at least temporarily domiciled. Not at all. Mrs. Beck may have had no trouble moving into the Savoy-Plaza or some such hovel, but not Mrs. Benti. In all this lovely New England countryside, where now in July the gently rounded hills are covered with lush green, where the other kids swim naked in a thousand swimming holes, here in this earthly paradise of blue sky and ocean, sand and newmown hay, Mrs. Benti can't find a decent place to live. And when I say decent, I'm not using the word in the Park Avenue sense, such as, "Honestly, Saks hardly has a decent model this time of the year."

When I use the word decent I mean Mrs. Benti can't find a place with enough room so that Gerda, who is twelve now, doesn't have to sleep in the same room with her brothers, who are eleven and fifteen. And I mean her kids have to live over a garage, a truck garage, where they start racing motors at 5:00 a.m. and bring the last trucks in after midnight. The reason she can't find a decent place to live is simple: she can't pay much money, and in Westport, Conn., USA, Mrs. Benti's race is not—shall I say popular?

Of course Mrs. Benti says Westport, Conn. (USA), is a perfect paradise compared to the current state of affairs in the auld sod. Practically everybody can vote around here, Mrs. Benti points out, and they don't have those signs in parks, and if her kids had any way of getting to a public swimming beach, which they don't, they could go swimming, right along with the other kids. And they can go to the same school.

Those things count. But there are flaws, flaws besides the little apartment over the garage. For example, Sephie, the youngest one, loved his first year in a Connecticut public school. He even made a friend. You see, Sephie had been lonely for a very long time, and this friend was an Event. Mrs. Benti said he brought Joe home nearly every night to dinner. Joe's mother never seemed to pay much attention to where he was, so Joe just stayed. Sephie adored Joe. He gave him all his special treasures, and did his homework for him, and saved his candy for him, and generally worshiped the ground where young Joe walked. After all, it was Sephie's first friend. It was an Event. Then one day . . .

But, you know, Mrs. Benti could hardly finish the story. Joe's mother and father, those fine Americans, they found out about Sephie. That is to say, they saw Joe and Sephie on the street and they called Joe over, and in a loud voice they asked Joe a question. Sephie heard the question. The whole neighborhood heard it. And Joe said—for children learn these things so slowly—"Yeah, sure he is, so what, Ma, so what?"

And for an answer, Joe's mother swatted her son across the face. Hard. "That'll teach you," she said, "to play with that ——"

God bless America, as Kate Smith says. God bless Marshall Field, who takes such good care of refugees. Maybe he'll do something about Sephie, and Sephie's father, who can't get a job, and Mrs. Benti, who scrubs the Connecticut floors, just as she scrubbed them before she went into exile far, far away from the land that she loves, the skies she still hankers for, the speech she still hears in her dreams.

For the word that Joe's mother yelled for the whole neighborhood to hear begins with an N, not a J. And it's spelled with two *g's,* instead of an *e* and a *w.* Not *Jude,* but ——. Well, in this magazine we do not print it in full, not because we're prissy, but because the sight of that word makes us sick, sick with shame.

Mrs. Benti (that's not her name, I told you) is a refugee from the state of Alabama. What do you think of that, Mr. Marshall Field? Mrs. Benti is in exile, too, just like Mrs. Beck. She didn't come in a boat, she came in an old Ford, and her kids darned near starved getting to Connecticut, the family finances were that low. They didn't dodge bombs, but they did dodge hunger. Hunger is also very nerveracking.

The only thing is, dear Kate Smith and Mr. Marshall Field, now that Mrs. Benti has escaped from the horrors of Alabama, now that she has arrived in the enlightened and civilized state of Connecticut, people still call her kids names, and her husband still can't get a job, and she still scrubs floors.

Mrs. Benti told me, "I wouldn't mind, for myself. But my heart aches to see my children."

God bless America.

"Someday," Mrs. Benti said, "Ah, someday!"

Richard Wright told me once, "There is great strength in the Negro people. Someday!"

Someday soon, Mrs. Benti and I believe.

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Plot against the Ballot

Blacklists, persecution, violence are part of the Hitler technique to keep the Communist Party from putting its candidates and program before the voters. Oscar Wheeler's case.

OSCAR WHEELER, as I write this, is still in jail. He was arrested on June 12 near his mountain farm at Beckley, in West Virginia, the state where "mountaineers are always free."

What did he do? Well, he believes in peace. In 1917 he was a conscientious objector to the World War; he spent eighteen months in Leavenworth Prison where he met another prisoner of war—Earl Browder. As Oscar Wheeler grew older, as he acquired a wife and a family, he turned his energies toward earning a living for himself, devoting as much of his reserve strength as he could find toward political expression, especially toward building the Communist Party.

Twelve years ago Oscar Wheeler came to the rough mining state of West Virginia. Early this spring, in strict accordance with the laws of West Virginia and of the United States, he sought to inscribe upon the ballot the names of Earl Browder and James W. Ford as candidates for the presidency and the vice presidency. In accordance with the will of the state convention of his party, he also sought signatures to petitions which would place his own name on the ballot for the office of governor. He personally obtained 1,400 such signatures and added them to approximately 7,500 obtained by others. These petitions carried the names of Browder, Ford, and Wheeler in large type; they bore the Communist emblem, the hammer and sickle.

"INVESTIGATION" BEGINS

The rulers of West Virginia, their public officials and paid commanders of "patriotic" organizations, the stoolpigeons and the company agents were outraged at the support Oscar Wheeler received. They knew the Communist Party was small; they had not known that its influence was so great. So investigators and clerks, typists and volunteer snoopers began to pore over the lists of signatures on the petitions. In Charleston officials of John Brawley Post No. 20, American Legion, sponsored publication of a pamphlet containing the petitioners' names. A printing firm offered to publish the pamphlet; the Fraternal Order of the Moose donated $500 for this purpose. The pamphlet, a formidable and authenticated affair, was published, with names arranged alphabetically.

In a few days small local newspapers reported that voters had been coerced into signing the petitions. A flood of slanderous stories followed. Wheeler and other Communists were represented as dangerous aliens, enemies of society, devils who were leading thousands of guileless West Virginians into hell. Petitioners were warned to recant; they were informed that free notarization was available to those who would swear that they had been tricked. Coal and steel companies led the hue and cry; they urged union members to save their organizations and their jobs. Miners were told they must withdraw their names within a few days or be turned out to starve.

A legal—or, if you please, illegal—drive of the state's attorney's office quickly followed. Lawyers scanned affidavits, recorded statements of stoolpigeons who had signed the petitions tongue in cheek. County prosecutors and grand juries puzzled over the statutes, seeking indictments. They turned up a law which provided that registrants on the rolls of one party who voted in the primary of another were guilty of a crime. Signing of the Communist petitions was construed as registration and Democrats who voted in their own party primaries were seized.

Finally, in his own poor Raleigh County, five indictments were returned against Oscar Wheeler for "misrepresentation and fraud." He was specifically accused of "falsely pretending to one Marie Slater that said certificate of nomination was in fact a petition to get a colored man in the White House"; also that he had advertised the petition as one which would "keep America out of war" and "defend the rights of labor."

When Oscar Wheeler heard of the indictments he set forth to Charleston to answer them. Newspaper headlines screamed that he had fled the state. Police were sent after him and he was arrested on the highway to the state capital. He was thrust into prison and bail was set at $5,000. This bail was easily available in the form of United States bonds. Judge Kilmore refused to accept them. He asked bail from a West Virginia bondsman; when such a bondsman, a Charlestonian, was found, the honest judge turned him down. He insisted on a bondsman from rural Raleigh County. In this way Oscar Wheeler's legal right to bail was denied.

Oscar Wheeler is still in jail. Because of his previous record as a political prisoner, he is faced with conviction as a second offender, and may receive a sentence of imprisonment for as much as ten years and a fine of $5,000. One hundred and forty-one others, accused of violating the election law in West Virginia, are awaiting trial. Protests have forced Judge Kilmore, machine candidate for United States senator, to grant a change of venue for Wheeler from prejudiced Raleigh County to Charleston. But the sheriff of Raleigh County (who said: "He can rot in jail for all I care") still collects 30 cents a day for Wheeler's prison fare, and Wheeler must remain under his tender care at least until August 6, when he will be conveyed to the state capital for trial.

The other West Virginians under indictment are mainly workers. Many are Democrats, a few Communists, many without any party affiliations. Several are women, several are Negroes. Not a few are the victims of old grudges, such as that Charleston lady of seventy-four, wife of a noted labor attorney who has won cases against the omnipotent coal and steel barons. She happens to be a kindly, old-fashioned liberal and, as it happens, a leader of the Methodist Church.

Old as is the story of political persecution, these cases in the West Virginia style have a sinister significance. The formula is intimidation, threats of blacklisting, innuendo, crookedly contrived charges, indictment, with violence tossed in to tip the balance when the law will not serve. This formula is being applied in state after state, where a minority, anti-war group of citizens seek political expression.

PENNSYLVANIA

Let's look at Pennsylvania. Led by Martin Dies and his American Legion aides, the servile Pennsylvania public officials have launched a statewide "dry terror" against citizens who signed petitions. Mr. Dies sent 29,000 franked letters to these Pennsylvanians, urging them to become fingermen against each other. Stoolpigeons had deliberately signed the petitions. Now they stepped forward with tales of "misrepresentation and fraud" in the West Virginia pattern. Newspapers such as the Scripps-Howard Pittsburgh *Press* published long blacklists; courts refused injunctions to stop this practice. A grand jury issued subpoenas by the wholesale to petitioners who were hailed into the jury chamber and prodded to "peach" on the Reds. Tables were set up in public thoroughfares to make it easy for the unwilling to withdraw their names.

Hysteria was fanned by newspaper headlines and radio comment as 105 Pennsylvanians were indicted, forty-three in Pittsburgh, including most of the Communist candidates for office. Reports were spread that the "wanted men" were fleeing the state. The defendants calmly appeared in the US attorney's office; on arraignment before a judge they were confronted with total bail of $350,000.

As I write, the Pittsburgh plague is spreading to Philadelphia, where similar tactics are being prepared. There blacklists have been published and firings are being threatened. The Philadelphia Board of Elections called Carl Reeve, Communist campaign chairman, and demanded information regarding petition signers in that city. He retorted by presenting documentary proof of forgery and fraud in petitions filed by the Democratic and Re-

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publican parties. To queries Mr. Reeve replied that to his knowledge the Communist petitions were correct in every detail.

The schematic precision of these onslaughts proves that they are well planned. It is pertinent to note that in most instances the attack has not been made directly upon the Communist Party, which is clear proof that the party is recognized as legal. Furthermore, no accusations have been directed against the technical correctness of the petitions, which have been scrupulously prepared and filed in accordance with state election laws.

Instead, a process of veiled blackmail, directed against progressives and trade unionists, marks the campaign. In West Virginia miners were threatened with firing if they did not withdraw their names. Several such firings occurred in steel and coal towns of Pennsylvania. Trade union leaders whose names were found on the petitions were hailed by Red-baiters before their union organizations. But in every case the signers have been sustained by the membership and resolutions for their expulsion voted down. Few citizens have capitulated to the Dies appeal for snoops.

Because state election laws vary, the offensive against canvassers and petitioners varies. In Illinois, for instance, the drive to prevent Communists from appearing on the state ballot was inaugurated by terrorism and without legalistic trappings. Pekin was the scene of a fight in May during which canvassers were beaten and held in "protective arrest" while a synthetic mob howled outside. When another group of canvassers arrived in Pekin a few weeks later, public officials stood by while they were attacked, then escorted them to the city limits. Violence spread from Pekin to Freeport, Rockford, and Albany Park. In Chicago thugs broke into a Communist meeting hall, smashed furniture; other hoodlums roamed the streets, looking for "Jewish Communists." Speakers for the Communist ticket in Rice Lake, Wis., were hauled down from their platform, manhandled, and ducked in the lake. Wealthy Republican Gov. Julius Heil approved this action. "I am real proud," he said the following day, "to see that we have some redblooded citizens up there. I hope Communists, no matter where they go, get the same kind of reception they got at Rice Lake." In New York canvassers in smaller communities have been held by local police—without charges—for periods of from one hour to several days.

Kentucky officials turned over petitions to Martin Dies, who has circulated a form letter in franked envelopes to seventeen hundred signers, urging them to act as informers against the "Reds." In Arizona, when canvasser George W. Johnson protested his arrest, the Santa Cruz county attorney, James B. Robins, told him: "Subject only to the will of God, the use at this time of any methods or means necessary to rid our country of Communism is not only justified but demanded, and I shall act accordingly whenever the opportunity presents itself." Democratic Gov. Robert T. Jones concurred with this view.

Michigan's Republican secretary of state, Harry F. Kelly, was handed nine thousand signatures to Communist petitions, more than necessary to place the party on the ballot. He publicly stated that he was making a cross-index of the signers and would fire any state employee whose name was discovered.

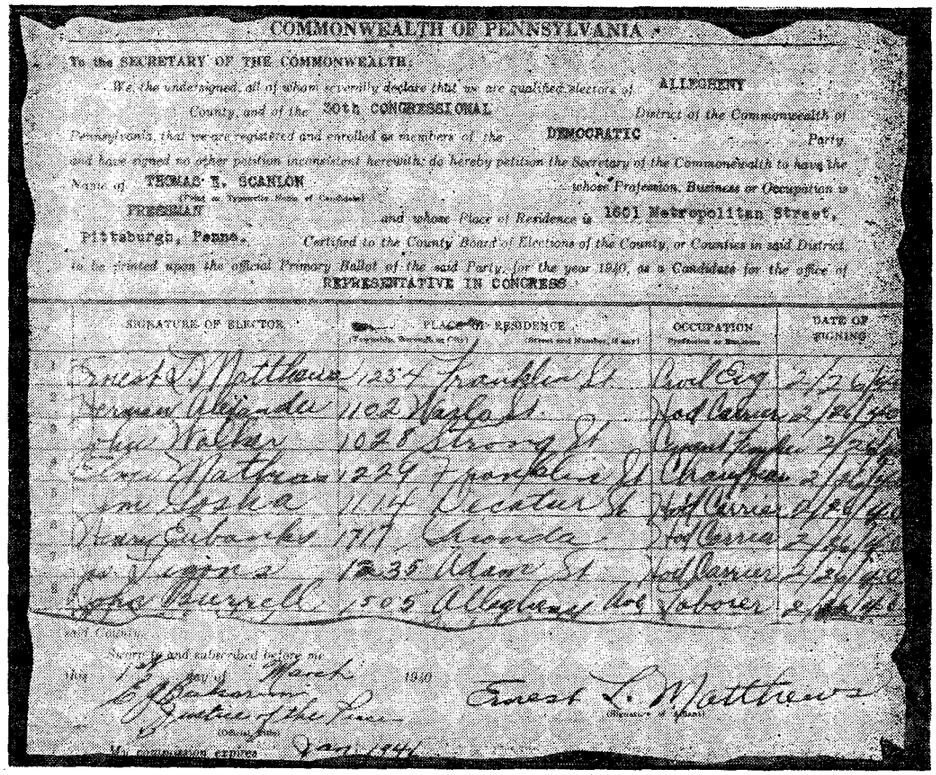
Against these flagrant violations of the federal law which prohibits interference with civil rights in the conduct of elections, the attorney general of the United States has taken no action. The victims of blackmail, terror, and police persecution are not, however, without friends. Wherever Communists have appealed for signatures to voters, a vast majority of whom are non-Communist, they have received remarkable support. In Columbus, O., where the Communist Party has about thirty-five members, three thousand names were obtained. Pennsylvania's liberals have rallied to the defense of those arrested. Pittsburgh's defendants were helped by protests from thousands of citizens. The excessive bail of $350,000 was cut to $150,000; today all of those arrested are at liberty. Threats by the Philadelphia Board of Education to fire fifty-eight teachers whose names appeared on petitions brought immediate protest from liberals, among whom are Anna M. W. Pennypacker, Josephine Truslow Adams, and others. Sixty-five educators, writers, churchmen, lawyers, trade unionists and others have asked President Roosevelt and Attorney General Jackson to take steps to ensure the Communist Party's constitutional rights in the present election campaign, and to prevent further attacks, particularly by state and local officials.

Many Americans are prepared to defend the ancient tradition of protecting minority civil rights. They realize that citizens are not only being deprived of suffrage—they are also being warned not to dare to make use of the traditional privilege of petition. They are even being intimidated into refusing to defend the rights of those with whom they disagree.

This is of course pretty much in the Hitler style. What's on the mind of the aspiring fuehrers? Georgia's Atty. Gen. Ellis Arnall ordains that the Communist Party is to be barred from the ballot in that state. He will not yield to "vermin who yell for constitutional immunities." The sheriff of Raleigh County, West Va., threatened prisoners and even lawyers. He told one New York attorney for Oscar Wheeler: "Your man can rot in jail for all I care, and you better git goin' too, 'cause no lawyer for a Red is any better'n he is." This is said in the true stormtrooper spirit. It comes as a byproduct of the dirty Dies "investigations," of the passage of the Smith Anti-Alien Act, and of the pressure for enactment of the Voorhis registration bill.

You've got to fight that kind of enemy every minute of the day. The Communist Party is working through the courts to protect its candidates and those other citizens who have adhered to the traditional American principle of political freedom. One thing is sure. If the political cannibals taste the blood of democracy they will proceed to devour other choice tidbits. Red meat is not their only dish.

JAMES MORISON.



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

To the SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH:

We, the undersigned, all of whom severally declare that we are qualified electors of ALLEGHENY County, and of the 20th CONGRESSIONAL District of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, that we are registered and enrolled as members of the DEMOCRATIC Party, and have signed no other petition inconsistent herewith; do hereby petition the Secretary of the Commonwealth to have the Name of THOMAS E. SCANLON (Print as Typewrite Name of Candidate) whose Profession, Business or Occupation is FIREMAN and whose Place of Residence is 1601 Metropolitan Street, Pittsburgh, Penna. Certified to the County Board of Elections of the County, or Counties in said District, to be printed upon the official Primary Ballot of the said Party, for the year 1940, as a Candidate for the office of REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS

SIGNATURE OF ELECTOR	PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Township, Borough, or City) (Street and Number, if any)	OCCUPATION (Profession or Business)	DATE OF SIGNING
Ernest L. Matthews	1234 Franklin St.	Real Est	2/5/40
Jerome Weinder	1102 Negley St.	Salesman	2/5/40
Ida Walter	1028 Strong St.	Housewife	2/5/40
Ernest Matthews	1229 Franklin St	Chauffeur	2/5/40
Jane Foster	1114 Center St	Stenographer	2/5/40
Mary Estabrooks	1717 Craig	Stenographer	2/5/40
Jerome Weinder	1235 Negley St	Salesman	2/5/40
Joseph Bourgeois	1505 Allegheny Ave	Laborer	2/5/40

(Seal) Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, County of Allegheny, ss:

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of March 1940

E. J. Robertson, Justice of the Peace

My commission expires Jan. 1944

Ernest L. Matthews (Signature of Affiant)

THIS PHOTOSTAT *of a petition filed by the Democratic Party in Philadelphia shows obvious irregularities. All the names are written in the same handwriting. Copies of this petition and others were submitted by Carl Reeve, Communist candidate for United States senator, to the county Board of Elections with a request for action against the law violators.*

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Open Your Doors to Us

The plea of a woman who tells the story of human misery in a French concentration camp. "What heartrending pain when the children were taken away."

Rieucros Camp, Lozere Province, France.

For days word had been going around in the women's concentration camp that soon another large lot of prisoners would arrive. We feared their coming. The thought of it added heavily to our daily worry. It gave us a feeling of hopelessness, a foreshadowing of even longer imprisonment with no hope of escape. What prospect had we of getting out, when all the time new prisoners were being sent in?

In the sleeping quarters, and in the washroom also, there was too little room already; in fact, it was almost impossible in those surroundings ever to be alone. Besides, there was the uncertainty as to who the new ones would be. We feared we might not be able to maintain our own self-imposed discipline, so necessary to give us some measure of decency and cleanliness. We had good reason to fear; lately there had come into the camp women of quite another stamp—criminals and prostitutes, many of whom could in no way adjust themselves to our conditions.

There came the day when we were ordered to make ready twenty straw sacks which meant that the twenty new prisoners were due to arrive. Filling the sacks with straw was a dirty and unpleasant performance, but we were glad to be assigned to it, nonetheless. It meant going to a barn that was about twenty meters outside the camp to do it, a barn in the middle of a lovely green field. Twenty meters, twenty whole meters, beyond the barbed wire! It meant at least a brief moment of freedom.

Roll call is over. The guards are gone. The door is bolted. The straw sacks that comprise our beds, and which by day are rolled up because the place where they lie is all the room we have to move about, are opened, and the sleeping bags and covers are spread upon them. A heavy dust fills the room. We take off our day clothes and prepare for the night. I watch Juta; she wears a slip and a shirt under her sleeping suit. The nights are bitter cold, and Juta has not yet recovered from the illness caused by her three years in a German concentration camp. We have far too few woolen clothes. The luckiest ones are those nearest the stove; and those who are near the light are lucky, too, for they can read, although it is a dim light and means that they strain their eyes in doing it. Some carry on a conversation; many lie silent.

Longings and hopes in fifteen European languages rise ceilingward. "Oh, for a Wiener schnitzel with salad on the side. . . . How lovely it would be to take a bath; maybe I might even get rid of my fleas. . . . Oh, for a cup of coffee. . . . If only I could have a big English dictionary!" Thousands of other deeper and more serious wishes were not spoken aloud, but were ever present in our consciousness during those long evenings.

Suddenly there is an exclamation. It comes from a young Czech girl. "For God's sake, what is that stink?"

"Stink? What's the matter with you today? As if it ever smelled any better!"

"Yes, I know it always smells. But *this*—!"

"Oh, that's just one of the cats. And Hilda is trying out a medicine for her rheumatism. Underneath, Vera has an alcohol lamp burning; she needs hot water for her mouth ulcers. There isn't any in the infirmary; and you know her face is very badly swollen."

"Sh!" her voice interrupts me in a whisper. "Say no more, or Lisolette, the dirty stool-pigeon, will betray Vera and her lamp to the police inspector!"

The sweat of so many women who have no way of keeping clean, mingling with the odors of medicines, animal excrement, and dust, becomes an unbearable stench.

"Blessed virgin!" rings out again the voice of the young Czech girl, "I can't stand it any longer! Come on, Gerda, let's have some of your fine eau de cologne."

I dole it out sparingly. When will I ever again get any such luxuries? But left and right, over the straw sacks, I sprinkle some of the precious liquid.

Several voices thank me. But Lotte, next to me, doesn't move. Although she already has three grandchildren, she is still a youthful and pretty woman. She lies there, her eyes closed. Her beautiful, much admired golden curly hair hangs like a protective veil over her face. I know she isn't sleeping. She has had bad news from her husband; he is seriously ill in a men's concentration camp near the Spanish border. She pretends to sleep, that she may be left alone to conceal her grief. In back of her, head to head, lies Hilda. Her husband has been for six years in Hitler dungeons, and she doesn't weep either.

"Are you ready?" calls out Anne's warm voice. She is the monitor of our room. "It's just nine o'clock. The lights are being put out."

At once deep darkness pervades the room. A few moments of silence, and then someone gets up and goes to the pails. Whispers are heard in the room. Someone laughs. In the Polish corner there is a joyful spirit today; a prisoner has had good news from relatives in Soviet Poland.

Our code of self-discipline demands quiet. We are so tired with the strain of the long day, those many voice, the everlasting noise that is inevitable with so many people crowded together! But quiet is not easy to attain. A soft, suppressed sobbing can be heard. She can no more help it than she can the long prayer which she begins before dawn. And there goes Elsa's cough. She covers her head with her blanket, but what good does that do? Her attacks are now too severe; she has tuberculosis. Her husband is in a concentration camp, and the finest of her brothers-in-law has fallen under Hitler's ax. Her neighbors turn away; they draw away from her as far as possible. Night after night they have to breathe in this sick woman's breath. The air is so heavy that from every corner come sounds of gasping.

Everyone tries with all her might to sleep. How hard it is with this eternal noise, this frightful air, these thousand thoughts that plague one! Sleep comes suddenly, just as one thinks of the right text, the one convincing argument to use in a letter to the minister of the interior, or the police commissioner. The fact that one cannot write it down makes the brain whirl. Or suddenly one has figured a way to communicate a matter of importance to one's husband in another camp, a way which the censor will not understand. The knowledge that by morning you will surely have forgotten it drives you crazy.

Unbelievably slowly you sink into a heavy sleep. Suddenly—noise, the door flies loudly open, the light turns on. Every woman sits up. A babel of voices—"What's the matter? We back here in the corner can't see anything! Have the new ones arrived? What nationality?"

As if in answer to that last, the fresh young voice of eighteen-year-old Maria Teresa rings out: *"Salud!"*

They are Spaniards.

We don't know how long the light will stay on, but it doesn't matter. For most of us sleep is no longer possible, and an endless grey night lies before us. Now the air is really unbearable. In the corner to which the newcomers have been assigned, there is constant commotion; and the Germans, usually so well disciplined, talk, get up, and move about without stopping. I believe I will choke. The cough-laden dust drives me under my cover. Somewhere a bed cracks and falls to the floor. Someone weeps heartbreakingly.

I get up from bed, long before the customary time. I must pass by the new arrivals, to wait at the door. The smell is simply overpowering. An old woman, well over sixty, as we were told later, vomited the whole night long. A pot, full to running over, stood near her; and behind her, head on head, the German woman lying there had to breathe in that odor. Another had diarrhea; and her pot stands there uncovered. All had traveled many days without being able to wash; and all of them came from one of the best known Spanish concentration camps in France.

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These twenty women are the very incarnation of human misery. Their baggage is entirely smashed; their things spill out. Their clothes are completely in tatters. Pale, thin, and sad are their faces. Two young women make an outstanding impression. One has coal black hair and deep brown eyes. Her sparkling white teeth contrast with her complexion of ivory. The other is small and delicately built, and has almost unnaturally large, dark blue eyes that look out in deep sorrow from beneath a high, smooth forehead.

"Down there in the little town they tore our children away from us," says Maria of the brown hair. "And as I clutched my two-year-old to me, so that they might not take her, the police beat me. We don't know where our children are, nor what is happening to them. Perhaps we'll never see them again; perhaps they'll be sent to Franco."

I saw the beautiful faces of these two young mothers light up again three weeks later. One day, rushing as quickly as possible in their heavy, painful, wooden shoes to the Administration Building, they found their children. Beside themselves with joy, they pressed their little ones to their hearts—their children whose fathers' blood now nourishes the Spanish earth. But the first joy was speedily followed by anxiety. For what a sight! I couldn't believe my eyes. The children were completely covered with lice and filth. The little bodies were a mass of sores and scales; and in spite of the sharp cold, they were scantily clothed. In this unbelievable condition they had come from the hospital of the little town on the edge of the camp. We helped to clean and wash them and made a collection from our own poor stores of condensed milk, oranges, and chocolate and fashioned some crude toys for them to play with. What a heartrending pain when the little ones were taken away again!

The twenty newcomers had no soap, no stockings, hardly any underclothes, no stamps with which to send letters to their people telling of their plight, no money with which to buy any. We made a collection among ourselves. Those who had three, or even two, pairs of stockings contributed some. Bars of soap were cut into pieces, stamps were distributed, and money was collected to procure indispensable nourishment for the starving ones. These Spanish women were made welcome wholeheartedly into the group that was largely middle and eastern European. But, alas! we had scarcely anything ourselves.

Klara, who years ago was dismissed from her position as dentist in the Freiburger University Clinic because she is a Jewess, and who lived through the whole Spanish war, immediately organized French-Spanish language courses. There were classes in reading and writing for the illiterates. We wanted these newcomers, who immediately became so dear to our hearts, to feel as comfortable in their three or four camps as we could possibly make it for them. How the eyes of the old mother shone when in passing her we asked in German, Jewish, Hungarian, and Polish accents: *"Como esta vd., senora?" "Muy bien e usted?"* the old lady would answer in her weak voice. *"Muy bien"*—even though the whole day long she was forced to sit on a straw mattress, in the semi-dark. But her eyes could light up with hatred, too—as when she told us that one of her sons was shot by Franco, and that the other, in constant danger of his life, must be in continual hiding in her beloved Spain.

Little Isabella comes over to us. Always energetic, always jolly, except when her severe stomach illness forces her back to her bed of straw. Boa used to call her sometimes: "Come, we'll take a walk, and you will speak German to me." The next day she would say: "Come, let's go to get the wood, and you and I can speak French together." And how quickly she learned, the little one, who only a short time before could scarcely read and write!

In spite of police and spies, on the 16th of February, anniversary of the victory of the Popular Front in Spain, we managed to arrange a celebration. There sang together that day, in all the languages of Europe, women from the most varied backgrounds. Many of them did not know why they were drinking tea. Some of us knew, however, and our faces glowed as we sang the songs that only we knew, only we understood. There we sat with the Spanish women; we, the Dutch, the Poles, the Swiss. Our turn had come, too. How often had the Spaniards warned us, as all too little aware of its meaning, and therefore all too indifferently, we watched them wage their war.

"Isn't it supposed to be that France is fighting for the freedom and democracy of Poland?" I ask Wanda, who comes from Warsaw. "Then what are you doing in this concentration camp?"

Yes, and we Dutch and Swiss: what are we doing here? There we sat and sang together the song of "The Peat-Bog Soldiers," the song of the prisoners of the German concentration camps: "Sure we are, that for us as well, the door will open. . . ."

G. T.

Still Time to Act

THE conditions described in this first-hand account by an anti-fascist German woman writer are typical of the horrors and indignities to which tens of thousands of the noblest men and women have been subjected. Over two hundred thousand refugees from Spain, Germany, Italy, and other countries are also scattered in various camps. With the collapse of France, an even worse fate awaits these refugees. The Spaniards are in imminent danger of being turned over to Franco, while the others, including a number who are nominally free, will be delivered to Hitler and Mussolini unless rescued by the countries of the western hemisphere. Funds to further the rescue work are being raised by the United American-Spanish Aid Committee, 200 Fifth Ave., New York, and the Exiled Writers Committee of the League of American Writers, 381 Fourth Ave., New York. Since the refugee problem is scheduled to be taken up by the Pan-American Conference now meeting in Havana, Cuba, it is urged that cablegrams be sent at once to Secretary of State Hull at Havana, urging him to use his influence to provide asylum without discrimination for the refugees.

The Exiled Writers Committee has received a number of letters from refugee writers in France appealing for aid. We publish here extracts from some of these letters, withholding for obvious reasons the names of the authors. A distinguished educator and scholar, seventy years old and half blind, wrote on June 26: "It rains. I tried in vain to buy a blanket. All sold out. I had to look for a pair of shoes and a sweater. . . . Maybe I will be transferred somewhere else any day. There are so many refugees, but I am alone. I can't make myself understood. Oh, for a human being to ask and to be answered."

One of the outstanding leaders of the German anti-fascist movement wrote on June 22: "When you get this card I don't know what will have become of me. But I know how a mouse in a trap feels. I send you — perhaps — my last greetings. Don't forget you have to do a lot yet. . . . Write to my child for me and take a little care of her. Write also to my friend and tell her I thank her much for everything and I am very sorry not to have seen her any more. Greet all the friends. It is a good time for working. A very good time. Only one has to have a chance."

An anti-fascist journalist wrote on July 4: "We have lost everything except the clothes on our backs. Three days and four nights we were on the road, fleeing on foot from Paris. . . . When will we fall into Hitler's hands? . . . We have been promised visas for the end of August, but September will come, perhaps October, and how will we be able to get out when all borders will be controlled by Hitler? . . . After the recent developments, unless help comes without delay, all of us will face the third and final internment, this time directly under German auspices. . . . Only swift energetic action from the USA can save us."

No Play for the "Help"

"PLAYLAND" is an ironic name to the employees of this $10,000,000 recreation center of New York State's wealthiest county, Westchester. Girl cashiers in their teens work an average of seventy-two hours a week for $15—and no unemployment insurance. Average male wage, except for the department heads, is $20 a week (also seventy-two hours). Employees are required to purchase uniforms costing about 25 percent of their first week's pay.

Before being hired, the applicant must certify that he is a voter and is willing to work the long hours without complaint. Founded in 1928 by the Westchester County Park Commission as a playground for the county's people, "Playland" forbids its beaches to Negroes.

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Murder in the Mines

Five miners die every day of the year from accidents that could have been prevented. Vital statistics in the bloodiest of American industries. The Neely-Keller bill.

At 2:30 on the morning of July 16 rescue squads brought up the bodies of sixty-three coal miners killed by an explosion in the Sonman mine of Cambria County, Pa. Three thousand people watched as the squads came up with their terrible burden. Many had been watching for fifteen hours. They were not the top officials of the Koppers Corp., the Mellon concern which operates this mine. They were the families of the dead men, and from the time of the explosion—shortly before noon of the day before—they had watched and hoped and despaired. What had been a daily fear in their lives was now reality.

The moods of coal towns are colored by these apprehensions of impending disaster. This was certainly true of the coal town where I spent my youth—a miniature culm-ringed place of unpaved streets, high-porched, rickety dwellings, and noisy coal trains. The town mirrored faithfully the temper of the mines. On workdays it sank into a stupor from which it failed to budge until whistles released the miners from a day of moiling and drudging in danger and darkness. The town itself seemed direly aware of the implications of mining as a way of life.

For a day seldom slipped by without a serious accident or a fatality reported at some local mine. Surgeons and undertakers prospered as the mines claimed their victims. White headstones gradually displaced venerable trees from the hilltop overlooking the town. Death, everyone agreed, was part of the unavoidable cost of coal—a price the mines exacted of foreman and mine laborer alike. When a colliery ambulance passed a mine worker's home aproned housewives came flying from their pots and washtubs to the front porches, their faces set in tragic anticipation. Children trailed the dread conveyance. Everyone understood the death that crouched pantherlike in some manway or coal-breast where boulders held up by miracles and oak timbering snapped like a toothpick beneath the pressures of top-rock.

TERROR

This terror brooded over every miner's household. From it there was no escape. In the midst of so much tragedy and despair no one imagined that mine accidents might be prevented; that behind the ghastly toll of lives and limbs taken by the mines lay the specter of profits; that mine inspectors had long known that accidents could be prevented if safety laws were enforced instead of hamstrung. Certainly the maimed and mangled victims fetched up from the mines on stretchers never understood this; nor did the Poles, Lithuanians, Hungarians, and members of a dozen other immigrant families who died digging our nation's fuel.

But the typical coal digger is no longer an inarticulate immigrant unaware of the political and economic threads that extend from his mine into state capitals and into the brain center of the nation's capital itself. From the chaos of many mine disasters a coherent picture of the situation is developing. The miner is beginning to insist on knowing why he must die in preventable accidents. The fatalism that marked the life of the coal miner in my youth is disappearing. He begins to suspect that tragedy may be only another name for the consequences of criminal neglect on the part of those who must ultimately bear the guilt for the situation.

For mining is still the bloodiest industry in the land. Five miners die of accidents every working day—the highest fatality rate in the world. Each year an average of 1,680 Americans in the prime of manhood lose their lives in coal mines. From 1906 to 1938, 69,165 miners were killed and another 3,453,244 were injured. Since 1910, the year the US Bureau of Mines was founded, 53,768 miners have died in disasters and accidents. Annual wage losses caused by accident to soft-coal miners alone are estimated at $30,500,000. Yet, paradoxically, the federal mine bureau has for years been insisting that coal mining can be made relatively safe and that this waste of human life has been needless.

The country was shocked by the news of the disaster that wiped out seventy-two lives at the Willow Grove mine in Saint Clairsville, O., recently. A short time before that, on January 10, another blast took ninety-one lives at the Bartley mine of the Pond Creek Pocahontas Coal Co. of West Virginia. The newspapers carried detailed accounts of both tragedies. But no newspaper saw fit to say what John Owens, United Mine Workers president of District 6 (Ohio), has told the writer: that the Willow Grove mine disaster might easily have been avoided, "if four or five basic principles had been accepted by the company." Van A. Bittner, UMWA president of District 17 (West Va.), similarly assures me that, under present mining conditions, with proper safeguards there could be no major explosions such as the recent one in Bartley. "Accidents in bituminous mining have not been curtailed in the last twenty years," said Mr. Bittner. "The coal operators and the mining department of West Virginia have not given proper attention to safety measures." These opinions only confirm the long-standing conclusions drawn by the experts of the federal Bureau of Mines. In the case of the Sonman tragedy company officials held that a gas explosion was responsible—which would not really exonerate the company, since improper ventilation would most likely have caused the explosion. Many of the miners declared it was a dust explosion, the result of insufficient spraying with rock dust.

Why then, it must be asked, must the miners continue to die? Why is it that the accident rate continues down the years virtually unchecked?

Since 1869, the year the first major coal disaster took 179 lives in Avondale, Pa., a network of state mine inspection bureaus has existed whose chief purpose has been the safeguarding of mines and miners. Every mining state today has a mining bureau, a chief mine inspector, and a staff of inspectors. But while mine casualties have continued at their old rate, the record shows fewer than forty instances where operators have been charged by inspectors with violations of the safety code.

This is rather curious in view of the fact that the federal mine bureau continues to assert that mining can be made as safe as any other industry. Who is to blame and why are the facts of the situation kept from the public?

For thirty years now the federal mine bureau has been functioning in an effort to lower the accident rate in coal, but the fatality rate per million man-hours in soft-coal mines in the last four years is as great as in the period of 1916 to 1920. The death rate in bituminous coal is 11.5 times greater than in thirty manufacturing industries regarded by the public as hazardous. The frequency rate of disabling injuries per million man-hours in the anthracite mining industry is the highest in the country: 92.62, and in bituminous, 37.27, as against a national average of 13.85. The severity rate (days lost per thousand man-hours) in anthracite is as high as 12.68 and in bituminous, 8.9, against an average for all industries of 1.58.

VITAL STATISTICS

One of every four miners working in the mines during the current year will be either killed or injured within the year. Yet mine operators not only seek to evade all responsibility for accidents within their mines; they seek often to wash their hands of any responsibility for the victims as well.

In Oklahoma, where fifty-nine miners died in accidents from 1932 to 1937, the workmen's compensation laws provide only for non-fatal injuries. The state industrial commission may award as much as $1,080 for the loss of a thumb, but is without jurisdiction to award a cent in event of the victim's death.

On July 14, 1939, twenty-eight miners lost their lives in a mine operated by the Duvin

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coal company near Providence, Ky. All but four of the victims were married and had children. Although one of the largest producers in western Kentucky, the Duvin company has remained outside the "elective" workmen's compensation laws. Survivors of the victims were thrust on public charity for support. The papers shed many a tear over another mine tragedy—but no audible pressure was brought to bear upon the company to bring its employees under the provisions of the compensation laws.

This penny-squeezing economy at the cost of the miner has had little to do with lack of funds on the part of the coal companies. The Hanna Coal Co., operators of the Willow Grove mine, reaped a million dollars in profits from this one mine in 1939—enough, one might assume, to warrant the maintenance of a proper supply of oxygen breathing apparatus at the mine for use in case of accident. Yet two officials of the mine owed their deaths directly to the lack of breathing apparatus after the recent explosion there.

A survey was made by the US mine bureau recently on mine rescue equipment kept on hand by the various collieries. It presents a depressing picture. In some mine disasters it is the recovery crew, rather than the men they are trying to rescue, who become the victims; yet in some states recovery crews are not even covered by compensation laws, but enter a mine at their own risk.

It was thought that the creation of a federal mine bureau in 1910 would bring about a change in the situation then existing. The bureau was set up to work out new safety standards and to disseminate information on mine safety work. But the lawmakers left the bureau shorn of any authority to make general rulings for the industry. The bureau's inspectors were denied authority to enter a mine without the mine owner's consent. Its reports were to be kept a guarded secret. Of its staff of a thousand experts only about sixty have been assigned to mine inspection service. Its functions have been exclusively of an "educative" nature. It might attempt to persuade a recalcitrant operator, but it lacked any power to make an employer take responsibility for any accident in his mine.

NEW LIGHT

The recent decision by Interior Secretary Ickes that the bureau make public its findings in the Bartley mine disaster was made in the face of strong objections from powerful cliques entrenched in the bureau. It breaks a long established tradition of tight-lipped servitude to mine owners' lobbies, on whose good will the bureau has habitually relied for its annual appropriations from Congress.

The bureau has doubtless achieved some worthwhile objectives in the field of explosives research and in other departments of investigation, but it has shown an unfortunate aptitude for ignoring other no less crucial aspects of the mine safety problem. Falling coal and rock are responsible for one out of every two mine fatalities. In 1936, 629 of the 1,342 mining deaths were caused by such accidents. Increasing use of electricity and mechanical equipment adds to existing hazards. Every miner knows it is not the spectacular disasters but the unending trickle of little-noticed daily accidents that chalk up the amazing annual total in coal casualties. Disasters are but symptomatic of the general drift of conditions prevailing in a sloppily managed industry. To these various aspects of mine safety the bureau has as yet given scant attention.

SPOILS POLITICS

The state mine inspection bureaus have also lacked authority; their duties have been confined by constricting legislation to the purely "educative" side of things. Spoils politics have taken over the department in a number of states. Operators as a rule do not feel themselves responsible for accidents unless previously informed by the inspector that such an accident was likely to occur. Private pressure groups hover in the background. Uncertain tenure puts the conscientious inspector at the mercy of the operators from whom he may someday be obliged to seek his livelihoood. Under these circumstances, it is not hard to see why accident investigations methodically reveal that a foreman or a miner was to blame.

The miners today, however, are watching the bureaus and inspectors closely. On a recent visit to my boyhood town in the anthracite region I found everybody interested in the fate of the Neely-Keller Federal Mine Inspection Bill now pending in Washington. This measure, passed by the Senate and still snagged in one of the House committees, would authorize federal mine inspectors to visit all mines at least once a year. Their reports on accident investigations would be made public. Miners believe that this alone might force operators to see to the improved safety of their mines. Strong mine owners' groups have ganged up to knife the measure. They still insist on having their undisputed way with the industry and with the lives of its 600,000 men. They insist, too, that the slaughter shall go on, and that it is unpatriotic to try to stop it.

The fight is on, and miners are known to be good, hard fighters. They have had enough of this futile dying: they want to live. In fact, they are beginning to insist on it.

ED FALKOWSKI.

Lady Astor's Children

"ONE of the inside stories CBS reporter Edmond Taylor brought back from England concerned the latest trip to this country of the steamship *American Farmer*. At a time when Britain was unable to bring children to these shores for lack of transportation, Taylor said, Lady Astor sent a dozen of her horses to the US in the hold of the *Farmer* at a cost of $400 per animal. The story was kept a secret, said Taylor, by the British government."—*Leonard Carleton, "Listening In," radio column, New York "Post," July 18.*

A. MacDuff

"Get up, dear, this morning you start for Plattsburg!"

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Platform Magic

THE Democratic platform makers proved fully the equal of their Republican brethren at the old-fashioned game of pulling the public's leg. There are some excellent planks in the Democratic platform. The only trouble is they are not the policies of the Democratic Party. For example: the platform pledges to "maintain the principles of the National Labor Relations Act." But who is the author of the Smith amendments, which aim to destroy the principles of the Labor Relations Act, if not a leading member of the Democratic Party? And it was the Norton amendments sponsored by the Roosevelt administration which provided the entering wedge for the more drastic Smith proposals. The platform states: "We have attacked and will continue to attack unbridled concentration of economic power and the exploitation of the consumer and investor." But it is the Democratic administration which has suspended the anti-trust laws for the war industries and has placed in the seats of the mighty some of the leading exponents of "unbridled concentration of economic power"—Messrs. Stettinius, Knudsen, and Forrestal. There is one true, or, rather, half true statement in this section of the platform: "We have enforced the anti-trust laws more vigorously than at any time in our history." They neglected to add: "against the trade unions."

It is news, indeed, that the Democratic Party pledges to extend and liberalize the Social Security Act, to provide "better health protection wherever the need exists in rural and urban areas," to "extend and accelerate" federal low-cost housing and slum clearance, and to "continue to bring to millions of children, youths, and adults the educational and economic opportunities otherwise beyond their reach." Strange, in view of these solemn pledges, that it is this same Democratic Party—ably assisted by the Republicans—which put on ice the proposed expansion of the Social Security Act, scuttled the Wagner Health Bill, shelved the new $800,000,000 housing bill, and buried in an unknown place the $855,000,000 educational program outlined by a special Roosevelt committee two years ago, offering America's youth instead the educational and economic opportunity to shoulder a gun and be "processed" into expert cannon fodder at $5 a month.

On the all-important issue of foreign policy the Democrats, as Adam Lapin points out in his article in this issue, adopted the Republican trick of facing two ways. And a final pledge to defend civil liberties provides the sauce for this demagogic stew which the American people are being asked to swallow.

Speech from the Throne

AFTER the Democratic convention had put together a foreign policy plank with much toil and sweat, President Roosevelt practically told the delegates to go jump in Lake Michigan. He did not so much as mention the platform in his acceptance speech, and what he said on foreign policy was enough to show that all the labor of the isolationists had been in vain. Men like Senator Wheeler of Montana announced a great victory after they had succeeded in writing into the platform an ambiguous pledge against sending the armed forces to fight in foreign lands; the interventionist New York *Times* wailed in anguish over the platform's failure to endorse specifically the Roosevelt foreign policy. But Roosevelt ignored even these weasel verbal concessions to popular peace sentiment; he declared that he stood by everything he had said and done, and what's more: "So long as I am President, I will do all I can to ensure that that foreign policy remain our foreign policy."

The President went even further—and this is one of the most ominous parts of his speech: he denounced all those who oppose his pro-war policy, all who want this country to remain at peace, as "appeaser fifth-columnists." Those are ugly words, and their meaning is even uglier. They just about cancel out all the fine phrases of devotion to civil liberties and the Bill of Rights which Roosevelt sprinkled into an earlier section of his speech. Nor is there much hope for civil liberties in this: "In the face of the danger which confronts our time no individual retains or can hope to retain the right of personal choice which free men enjoy in times of peace."

Compared to these statements on foreign policy and civil liberties, the President's pretense that he really didn't want to run but could not refuse to be drafted into his country's service, though mildly nauseating, is inconsequential. The issue is not a third term—progressive government needs an indefinite number of terms. The issue is peace or war for America, democracy or fascism. It is clear that whether Roosevelt or Willkie wins the election, peace and democracy will be in extremely unsafe hands.

China-USA-USSR

CHURCHILL'S explanation of why Britain closed the Burma road to China's supplies merely adds hypocrisy to an infamous betrayal. With the announcement that "mediation" of the war is under way, it is clear that Britain is letting China down in the hope of deflecting Japan from her own positions in the South Pacific. China is so decisively the hope of democracy and liberation in the Asiatic world that Britain's action again discloses how empty are her pretensions to the defense of democracy, how obvious is the imperialist character of the British struggle with Germany.

Within Japan a government of "national unity" is being formed under the leadership of Prince Konoye. This is an important development. It is dictated, first, by the desire on the part of Japanese big business to exploit Japan's diplomatic advantage at the moment when her rivals are occupied elsewhere; second, to keep the lid on more firmly at home; third, to bring the war in China to the best possible conclusion in the shortest time; and fourth, to oust American, British, and French interests from the Far East without provoking a major war. Those are tasks which the Japanese ruling class cannot afford to bungle any longer. That is why Konoye emerges from behind the scenes to handle things himself.

All these events have brought to the surface differences between British and American Far Eastern policy. Cordell Hull last week specifically criticized the British move and restated American non-recognition of Japanese conquest by force of arms. On the other hand, there is at least confusion, if not disagreement, within the State Department itself. The day after Cordell Hull left for Havana Sumner Welles declared the willingness of the United States to negotiate the withdrawal of extra-territorial privileges in China—almost the same words with which Churchill sugared the pill of betrayal. Such promises are demagogic, if at the same time nothing is done to prevent Japan from fastening her own talons on the body of China, but, on the contrary, those talons are sharpened by materials provided by the United States.

Three forces are being forgotten in all calculations: China herself, the USSR, and the American people. Now if ever, the unity between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communists must be solidified, traitors must be ousted, capitulators unmasked. The American people have the obligation to build a united front with China and the USSR—which alone can halt fascist aggression in the Far East. China may become what Czechoslovakia might have been, if the United States takes the course which France adopted but her rulers betrayed—the course of collaboration with the USSR. How obviously the common action of France and Czechoslovakia with the USSR might have spared Europe this war and the French people their defeat. China can be a bridge between the American people and the USSR—a bridge of mutual security for all three parties. Can we learn from history while there is time?

Hitler's Speech

NATURALLY, the Nazis prefer not to fight Britain. The risks are much larger than the risks in France. Hitler's offer of a "commonsense peace," however, is one of the most important revelations of German strategy thus far, whose significance transcends, whether or not it is accepted. Its motivation will reappear even if this war goes on. As NEW MASSES has emphasized many times, the domination of

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capitalist Europe has given Germany a new world position. The Nazis now revive, as Hitler implies, the older pattern of an Anglo-German-French-Italian coalition which was symbolized by the Munich conference—on the new basis in which Germany's paramount power is fully acknowledged. Germany does not intend to appropriate the British and French empires by physical force. She intends, or desires, to have the French and British ruling classes *administer* the colonial world while German capital, increasingly fused with British and French capital, literally takes the lion's share of raw materials and commercial penetration. This explains why the French traitors were left in control of their colonies. So would the British rulers be, if they came to Germany's armistice table, quite in the same sense that the Dutch, Belgian, and Portuguese upper classes maintained colonial power in the shadow of British industrial supremacy two centuries ago.

The Nazi strategy is motivated by the fear that continuation of the war will break up empires in such a way that no capitalist power could piece them together again. The repercussions would be terrific in Europe. Germany is again trading on the tory fear of socialism without saying it in so many words. It is a fear which Germany in her new position fully shares. The British bourgeoisie finds itself more deeply than ever in the dilemma of its own decline. This time there may be no muddling through. Continuation of the war may mean the physical destruction of Britain herself as well as the upset of all stability in Asia. Coming to terms with Germany involves the acceptance of a subordinate position—a sellout of the nation such as the British masses will not accept, and may, as all of us hope, avert by the setting up of a true people's government. Which, again, is precisely what the British rulers fear most.

Baltic Liberation

ESTONIA, Latvia, and Lithuania elected new parliaments on July 14. By an overwhelming vote, the peoples of the three little Baltic states chose the path of political and economic unity with the Soviet Union. Six days later, on July 20, the three parliaments decided to apply for admission to the USSR. These acts, which constitute the final establishment of national independence for the Estonian, Lettish, and Lithuanian peoples, have been presented as "a grab by Russia" in the American press. Led by Otto D. Tolischus of the New York *Times,* who writes deprecatingly from distant Stockholm about events in Riga, Tallinn, and Kaunas, newswriters have attempted to portray the sovietization of the Baltic States as an act of political aggression imposed by the Red Army. Mr. Tolischus is the same correspondent who wrote anti-Soviet propaganda from Helsinki in the days when the Finnish White Guards were preparing, with Allied assistance, to provoke a conflict with the Soviet Union.

For the first time in seven centuries, since the Baltic land fell to the Teutonic order, the peoples of the eastern shore are free of all foreign and domestic domination. Hanseatic robber barons first enslaved these countries; the rival ambitions of Peter the Great and Frederick the Great clashed on their soil. Polish landlords invaded them, and finally the czars clamped their autocratic chains about these peoples' necks. With the Russian Revolution of 1917 they were able briefly to assert their will for freedom, but soon Germany invaded their soil. Even after the armistice of 1918 Britain left large German forces to guard imperialist interests in the Baltic, to create little republics as a *cordon sanitaire* against socialist progress. For twenty-two years the people writhed in mock "democratic republics" until the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact of last year. As a consequence of this agreement the German ruling class of the Baltic states was removed to Germany. Now has come the final act of liberation.

Even Mr. Tolischus admits (New York *Times,* July 15): "Workers, who felt themselves downtrodden in the former authoritarian regimes . . . are quite satisfied with the changes, especially since wages and salaries have been raised 15 to 20 percent. . . . The poorer peasants are buoyed by the prospects of sharing in a division of estates of the 'Baltic barons.'" And he also reports that the Jews have been freed of the fear of anti-Semitism. Add up the workers, the peasants, and most of the Jews, and the overwhelming vote in favor of union with the USSR becomes a matter of simple arithmetic.

The Quality of Mercy

NO ONE but a sadist can fail to appreciate the frantic anxiety of the British people to remove their children from the reach of Hitler's bombers. American sympathy has expressed itself in the offer of homes for these children and the cutting of red tape surrounding immigration. When Winston Churchill announced that the government had abandoned its original evacuation plan for lack of convoys, a movement was started in this country to amend the neutrality laws in order to send American ships for the children. A bill to that effect, introduced by Rep. Emmanuel Celler of New York, is pending in Congress. The National Maritime Union has offered to donate its services to a rescue ship, provided a steamship company gives free passage—and provided there is no discrimination against poor children.

The NMU's second proviso is a commentary on Britain's ruling class. Last week a dispute in Parliament emphasized the fact (already evident to readers of the American press) that the relatively few children thus far evacuated to Canada and this country have been from England's titled and wealthy families. High officials in the government, like Duff Cooper and Sir John Simon, have used their positions to send away their own children and those of their relatives and friends. Meanwhile, the underprivileged parents shudder, remembering the torn bodies of Madrid's children whom Franco's bombers killed by the hundreds in crowded working class districts. We also remember those children—and the children in China, of Jewish parents in Germany. Why were their sufferings ignored by all except the people who were least equipped materially to help them? Why, indeed, are Spain's bravest anti-fascist refugees not being evacuated from Hitler's and Petain's France? South American countries have promised them an asylum if the United States will provide ships to bring them over. Why aren't these ships forthcoming? The quality of mercy must not be strained by class favoritism or war partisanship.

Roundup

CONTRAST: While world capitalism concentrates on killing people off, Soviet scientists work to extend human life span to at least a hundred years, says article in July's *Soviet Russia Today.* . . . MERCHANTS OF DEATH: Du Pont reports highest earnings in history for June quarter—$22,425,927—same day that government grants it $20,000,000 contract for smokeless powder plant. . . . CUBA: Communists elected four mayors in big cities in recent elections, among them Justo Salas, first Negro to achieve such office. . . . BIRTHDAYS: Seventy-eight candles for (Mother) Ella Reeve Bloor and fifty-six for Fighting Bob Minor, both among the most colorful figures in the American Communist Party. MILESTONE: United Automobile Workers of America (CIO) begins drive to organize aviation industry when workers of Vultee Aircraft Co. at Downey, Calif., vote for NLRB election 1,439 to 512. . . . CONTROVERSY: Manuel Quezon, Philippine president, demands end of two-party system, criticized by High Commissioner Francis B. Sayre and Manila Civil Liberties Union. . . . PROPHECY: C. Howard Ferguson, former Conservative premier of Ontario, Canada, declares Roosevelt renomination a good thing. Predicts that "the President would win on November 4 and that the United States would be in the war by Christmas." . . . RIGHTO: Letter in the New York *Daily News,* "Voice of the People" column, July 22, says: "I'm in no way a booster for Communism, but after reading of the treachery and betrayal by men in key positions in France, Norway, Austria, and various other countries gobbled up by Hitler, I believe Russia has shown wise judgment in purging a lot of suspected traitors from its own army and government setup. Or am I wrong?" REJECTION: The national committee of the National Maritime Union (CIO) issued a ten-point indictment of the Roosevelt administration and withdrew previous support of FDR's reelection. Declared labor should take independent political stand, backing candidates who "will commit themselves to a program calling for return of the New Deal, preservation of all gains made by labor, preservation and extension of the wage-hour law and all other legislation calculated to protect the rights of the American people and to increase the standard of living."

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. . . Two Steps Backward

In his new book John Strachey tries to reform capitalism. His farewell to Marxism. Grasping the wrong link. A review by Bruce Minton.

A PROGRAMME FOR PROGRESS, *by John Strachey. Random House. $3.*

THERE was a time when those who advocated reform of the Supreme Court were in the forefront of the progressive movement. In 1937 the fight to deprive nine old men of usurped legislative powers was also an expression of the central struggle to implement the then functioning New Deal, to expand it, and to limit the vast strength of the most reactionary section of American capitalism. But today anyone who suddenly came forward with an impassioned appeal for reform of the Supreme Court (which could certainly stand a thorough going over) would hardly be voicing the chief concern of the American people. The protagonist of such a program might even be justly accused of trying to confuse the people, deflecting their attention from the main task of resisting the administration's drive toward war and toward the fascization of America.

A Programme for Progress is open to this criticism. With capitalism in crisis, with war spreading and gross reaction taking the offensive, John Strachey presents a program that lacks relevance. Perhaps, to a limited extent, his suggestions would have had weight in the pre-war Popular Front period—a period which Mr. Strachey acknowledges is very much in the past. Unfortunately, Mr. Strachey's book cannot possibly serve as a guide to action at the present time.

A Programme for Progress rests on the contention that the working class in Great Britain is not strong enough to overthrow capitalism and that at the end of the war England will be right back where it was a year before war broke out. Then, "after the war," there will be a chance to modify the system in a manner that will lead to the eventual demise of capitalism. Of course, Mr. Strachey hastens to admit, society's ills will be solved only when the profit motive is finally displaced by socialism. Yet, since the prospect of attaining a new order is obviously (to Mr. Strachey) extremely remote, the people are urged not to despair. Instead, Strachey counsels a course that will, oh so gradually, gently, effortlessly, and in some far off time, ease us into a new and better mode of life.

It is well to remember that this program is advanced at the moment when the class struggle has deepened, when capitalism is weak and desperate, and when the possibilities of a revolutionary upsurge are ever more favorable. Clearly, the most pressing problem faced by the peoples of capitalist nations is what to do about the imperialist war. The France we knew no longer exists—it has been transformed into a vassal fascism. Frenchmen cannot concern themselves with forlorn attempts to reform capitalism. France's problem is to rid herself of the conqueror and the conqueror's gendarmes, the French traitors, the French *haute bourgeoisie* who now rule the remnant of France in trust for Hitler. What solution has meaning, except the overthrow of the Nazis and their French henchmen, except revolution of workers, peasants, and the lower middle classes? Similarly, what is the choice confronting the English people? If Britain is betrayed by the English counterparts of Daladier and Blum, Petain and Laval, the situation becomes exactly analogous to that in France today. The repulse of German aggression can be accomplished only by the immediate organization of a true people's defense free of threats from treacherous Cliveden sets in the rear. The English armed force can only function powerfully and efficiently if it is rid of appeasing upper class officers, if the government is cleansed of members of the effete aristocracy and corrupt representatives of monopoly. And for what end should the defense be carried on? To the end of rescuing England for the people—a democratic, anti-imperialist end.

In this emergency Mr. Strachey goes on mulling over ideas of doubtful pertinence. As the fateful year 1917 dawned, Marxists did not ponder what to do if the czar still retained power at the end of the war. The problem was rather how to rid Russia of the czar, how to end the war, how to advance toward socialism in the immediate future.

Lenin made the profound statement that "What is needed is the ability to find at any moment that particular link in the chain which must be grasped with all one's might in order to gain control of the whole chain and prepare thoroughly for the passing on to the next link." Lamentably, Strachey has taken a mighty hold on the wrong link. "It is essential," Lenin also wrote, "to realize the incontestable truth that a Marxist must take cognizance of real life, of the concrete *realities,* and must not continue to cling to a theory of yesterday. . . ." But that is exactly what Mr. Strachey is doing.

Have we something to learn from this book? First of all it should be pointed out that Mr. Strachey deliberately excludes politics from his discussion. That is, he offers an economic program without suggesting how it can be achieved. Such treatment abandons the methods of Marxism: an end cannot be advocated without considering the means to accomplish it; economics cannot be discussed apart from their setting in politics, or politics without reference to economics. Otherwise discussion remains speculative, suspended, like the proverbial liberal, firmly in mid-air.

Strachey, however, commits this error. Even so, his economic proposals are worth a moment's consideration. His program is designed to increase "the share of the mass of the population in the national product at the expense, *not of profits,* but of the other two subdivisions of the share of the product going to the owners of the means of production, namely rent and interest." (My italics —B. M.) It is designed "to find some way of raising the national standard of life in conditions in which the total abolition of capitalism, as opposed to its modification, is not yet possible." How do this? By ridding capitalism of unemployment—by "methods for getting additional purchasing power to the people, without raising the cost of production." And these methods, Mr. Strachey declares, are to promote public enterprise and investment; to lower the rate of interest to all borrowers; to redistribute income through taxation; to create money to pay greatly increased pensions and allowances; to develop a national and public, as opposed to a commercial and profit-making, banking system.

Now these methods are for the most part the time-honored devices of progressive movements in this and every other developed capitalist country. But the heart of Mr. Strachey's plan is his desire to create new money and thus raise the demand for consumers' goods, forcing up production until the unemployed are all once more holding jobs. In other words, make capitalism work by eliminating the crises with which it is periodically afflicted. Eliminate the contradictions between social production and individual appropriation, the contradictions that are the very essence of capitalism. Create new money, and therewith buy capitalism a surcease from its own torturing paradox.

Mr. Strachey is assuming that the wheezing mechanism can be doctored up to work smoothly. But the entire history of capitalism proves that once the monopoly stage is reached, contradictions are so consuming that no amount of tampering will effect a cure—that is, no nostrum can steadily raise the standard of living of the masses and put everyone back to work. In the heyday of the New Deal at least seven million men and women remained jobless. Why didn't the New Deal plunge ahead, devising ways and means similar to those suggested by Strachey to cure unemployment? Because, even if monopoly capitalism had embraced Mr. Strachey's

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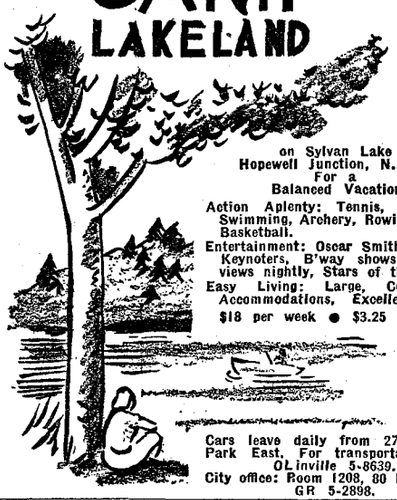

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plan, or even if the people were able (without being strong enough to win a socialist society) to force monopoly to accept some such plan, the creation of new money and the other "cures" would not have brought the desired result. To solve capitalist crisis means, among other things, to solve the chronic agrarian crisis, with which Mr. Strachey shows no concern.

Moreover, Mr. Strachey nowhere discusses the essential problem of the class struggle. But in America we recall the hullabaloo from the industrialists and financiers when even the mildest reforms were projected in the New Deal period. Mr. Strachey's plan envisages taking privilege and power away from the mighty. The reforms he suggests are sweeping. Where will the capitalists be when the plan is being enacted? Isn't there a class struggle in America, or are we just one big happy family, with the Rockefellers and the Morgans worrying themselves sick over putting the unemployed back to work and raising the living standards of all the people?

The promised "alleviation" is to be won evidently outside the class struggle—and therefore Mr. Strachey's whole plan is a deception. His program is false because it fails to consider capitalism as a whole, because it avoids mention of the interdependence of the imperialisms. It is false because brave words about breaking the grip "of what is usually called finance capitalism upon the economic system" and the substitution of a "non-profit-making, non-capitalist, financial mechanism" are completely meaningless unless capitalism is shattered. There is no such thing as Mr. Strachey's "unaggressive and unimperialist" monopoly capitalism, any more than there is such a thing as a square circle. If Mr. Strachey envisages replacing monopoly with mercantile capitalism, then he is bewitched by the same dream that haunted the elder La Follette—the search to recapture a bygone era somehow, someway.

Actually, Mr. Strachey is not bewitched. He has quite knowingly, but with a very shrewd attempt to disguise his position, embraced the collaborationist principles of social democracy. His program, even if it had appeared in the Popular Front period, would lack cogency because it denies the existence of the class struggle. He attempts, as do all good social democrats (Blum in France, the leaders of the British Labor Party in England, Norman Thomas, Dubinsky, and Hillman in this country), to solve the difficulties of the ruling classes for them—at the expense of the people. The guilt for the outbreak of the present imperialist war must be borne by the social democrats who by sabotage of the Peace Front, and knifing the most progressive sections of the international labor movement, undermined the defenses against fascism and war. Mr. Strachey has now joined their camp—at a crucial moment. His task is to prepare the "program" to lead the people, not to a lasting peace, but, at the end of this phase of the imperialist war, safely back into the camp of moribund capitalism.

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Willkie's Summer Reading

TOO BIG, *by Morris L. Ernst. Little, Brown & Co. $2.75.*

THIS is one of the books which Wendell Willkie took along on his vacation. The blurb calls it a "fascinating description of the dangers of bigness in business," and it is a pillow-tossing, hair-rumpling assault which must have left the Republican candidate gently winded and unabashed.

Had Mr. Ernst written this book thirty years ago he might have made some small contribution to our fathers' understanding of the processes which evoke the giant monopolies. But thirty years ago Louis D. Brandeis was writing *Other Peoples' Money,* which is a far more searching work. Justice Brandeis probably knew little or nothing of a contemporary Russian, then in exile, who was also in those years examining the same developments in capitalism with incomparably greater understanding. But Mr. Ernst has heard of Lenin and cannot be excused for his ignorance of *Imperialism.*

In 1910 it took courage and vision to warn of the dangers to democracy inevitable in the gigantic aggregations of capital. But today the genuine progressive sees that what appeared to an earlier generation as a plague of oversized combinations is actually the "highest stage of capitalism," differing in quality as well as bulk from the institutions of a preceding era. We can see that monopoly is really the negation of the free competition of classical capitalism; that the dominating coterie now are the big bankers; that the declining rate of profit which the trusts accelerate leads millions of smaller middlemen and manufacturers toward bankruptcy while a few bloated corporations take the cream; that out of the domestic aggrandizement of the monopolies and their foreign investments and market hunting come intensified crises, unemployment, hunger, fascism, and wars.

In this book Mr. Ernst has dealt with an all-important problem in terms of a flippant formula. We in America have a fondness for superlatives. We like to have the best, the biggest. The best is the biggest. So we get too big. So it isn't healthy. So we should reduce a little. Not too much or too quickly, but somewhat—and slowly. Mr. Ernst reminds me of a Park Avenue obesity specialist catering to a fat rich dowager.

Readable, even sprightly, the book repeats many well known episodes in the history of American trusts and a few anecdotes that are unfamiliar. What makes this book interesting as a study are the significant omissions and the tricky shifting of emphasis. I can imagine the vehemence with which the learned

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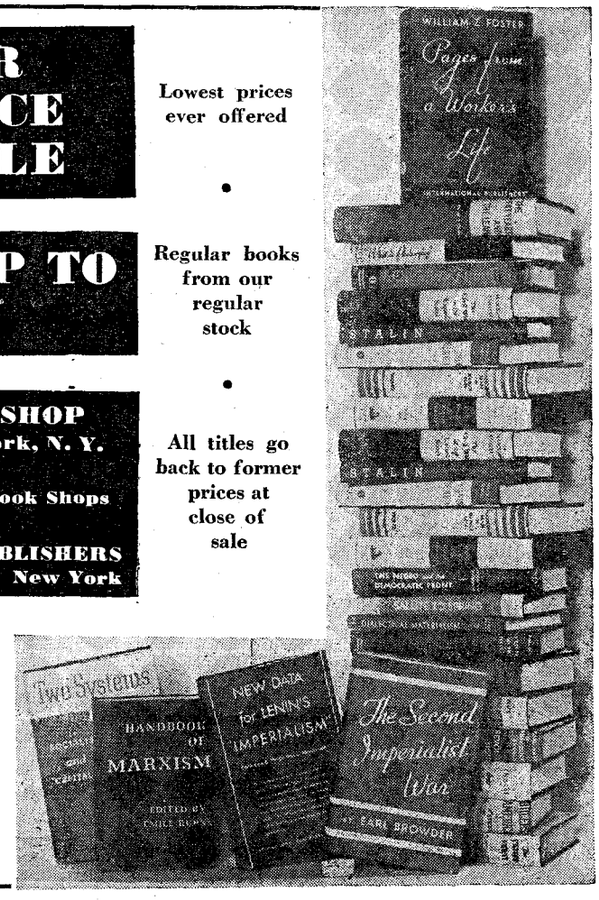

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counsel would deny this charge. Accuse Mr. Ernst of avoiding the role of the bankers in the development of monopolies and he will point to his chapter on the overlarge savings banks. Ask him why he does not deal with the effect on the American standard of living of monopolist price fixing and he may answer that he does refer to the "Pittsburgh plus" system of steel prices, and anyway he is not dealing so much with monopolies as he is with corporations and institutions that are just too big, too unwieldy, too sluggish for *their own good*. He is, in fact, more concerned with losses to stockholders than he is with diseases, social, economic, and political, with which the trusts infest our lives.

Let us see, however, what the Dies committee's favorite liberal has to recommend by way of reducing exercises. He proposes government regulation of big corporations which in effect—in this era of the wars and breakdown of capitalism, in this stage of approaching fascism—is self-regulation. Nowhere does he support the only forces which can make government regulation socially effective, the organized labor movement, independent farmer-labor political struggle. He bemoans the fact that until recently there were so few lawyers in the anti-trust division of the Department of Justice, but makes no mention of the employment today of an augmented staff in the assault upon the trade unions. Probably the unions are too big!

Since the government itself is suffering from Bigness, Ernst wants more powers delegated to the states and their subdivisions. That falls handily in line with the doctrine of returning relief to the counties and condemning the jobless to starvation. Unemployment, by the way, he does not include among the institutions that are Too Big.

To our author Edward Stettinius is a man of "energy and social vision." Mr. Myron Taylor has a "great labor record," and they are "not tools of J. P. Morgan." So when the kingpins of finance capital, a Knudsen, a Taylor, a Stettinius, take the reins in hand to whip the country into panic and repression and war, Mr. Ernst has no comment. Each recommendation turns out more phony than the last. Thus he advocates the "town meeting method in guiding our economic affairs" and in planning for decentralized industry. But he does not examine either the vast political changes this would require or the validity of the "decentralization" solution under capitalism. And how does he reconcile this lip service to freedom of criticism with his cheap wisecracks about Communism and his support of restrictions upon the rights of Communists to propound their *workable* solution for our society?

For sixty years we have heard democracy defended and the trusts attacked. At this late date Mr. Ernst does both with neither conviction nor sincerity. He makes a single mention of Krupp and Thyssen. Does he not see their counterparts here? Or is he too much enamored of the "genius" of these "giants"?

FRANK J. WALLACE.

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Six Songs for Democracy

Records made in Barcelona in 1938 immortalize the songs of the Thaelmann Battalion . . . Child prodigy at the Stadium . . . Joan Crawford in "Susan and God."

IN THE days between the Big Retreat of April 1938 and the Ebro Offensive which began on July 25, the Lincoln Battalion was encamped on a road near Marsa in Catalonia. About four kilometers from us the men of the 11th International Brigade were also in rest quarters, rebuilding their cadres, training. During our time off we used to trek over the hills to their camp—we had heard their canteen had cigarettes for sale, ham, cookies, other delicacies that make a difference to a soldier in the line. Well, as usual, the rumors were wrong. They had no cigarettes, and the ham they had was already spoken for; but we stayed to watch them at drill, these German anti-fascists, to admire the neatness and orderliness of their encampment, which contrasted so violently with our own.

These Germans, despite the bitter privation we all suffered in those days, had brought some of their German passion for organization to the front. Where they got the clothes we do not know, but they all managed to be dressed alike; they all wore their blankets rolled identically and draped over the same shoulder. Their camp was neat as a pin; there were even flower beds! There was no water, but they were clean; their equipment was as meager as ours, but they were always shaved; their clothes were in repair. And the way they marched! The way they sang!

Would you like to hear the way they sang? Would you like to hear these voices out of a not too distant past? Very few men of the German anti-fascist Thaelmann Battalion outlived the Spanish war of intervention. Those few who did were immediately interned in France when the International Brigades were demobilized and sent across the border. And where are they now?

So these immortal voices that you will hear when you buy and play the *Six Songs for Democracy* (just issued by the Music Room, 133 West 44th St., N.Y.C.), will be the voices of the dead—and the voices of the ever-living. They sing, on these three records, the songs they sang in Spain; songs, some of which were composed spontaneously on the spot, some of which came from German concentration camps; some of which were already part of the international working class movement. The records, originally made in Barcelona in June of 1938, have been re-recorded, cleaned up in the process—all but one. That one record bears a little sticker, just as the original Spanish record did. That sticker says: *"La impresion defectuosa de este disco es debida a las interrupciones de energia electrica durante un bombardeo."* This is a simple and a dramatic statement: "The defective impression of this record is due to interruptions of electric current during an air raid." For just as the men who sang these songs sang them in the midst of battle, so were they recorded by the great German working class tenor, Ernst Busch, and the chorus of the 11th Brigade, under conditions of actual warfare. No songs of our time are more inherently dramatic, more deeply rooted in the traditions of the struggle for human liberation; and the interpretations offered by Busch and the soldiers' chorus are literally magnificent.

From the German concentration camps comes the great anonymous prisoners' song, *"Die Moorsoldaten,"* with its heart-stirring opening:

Wir sind die Moorsoldaten
und ziehen mit dem Spaten ins Moor

and its thrilling promise (in the English translation):

But for us there is no complaining,
Winter will in time be past. . . .
Then will the peat-bog soldiers
March no more with their spades to the bog.

There is Hans Eisler's celebrated "Song of the United Front," sung in four languages; there is the song about Hans Beimler, the commissar who fell in the defense of Madrid where so many hundreds of the Thaelmann Battalion died; there is the popular and humorous *"Los Cuatro Generales,"* derived from an old Spanish folk song and reworded for other purposes. There is the *"Lied der Internationalen Brigaden."*

But most magnificent and compelling of all is that which bears the name of the singers: *"Die Thaelmann-Kolonne."* Its music by Peter Daniel, its text by Karl Ernst, it forms a cadence of crashing chords and measured beats. In this song both Ernst Busch and the chorus of the battalion reach their most vigorous statement, and you cannot hear this song without experiencing an emotion identical with that Paul Robeson expresses in his tribute to this music: "I was there in the course of that struggle and my faith in man—in the eventual attaining of his freedom—was strengthened a thousandfold." This is such a song as rises spontaneously from the hearts of fighting men and women, such a song as the "Star Spangled Banner," as *"La Marseillaise"* (now banned in fascist France), as the "Comintern":

Die Heimat ist weit,
Doch wir sind bereit.
Wir kaempfen und siegen fuer dich:
Freiheit!

Ernst Busch, whose records in pre-Hitler Germany sold as many as 300,000 copies at a time, was in Spain during the war and now is missing. Missing too are most of the men who were among the first to come to the assistance of Spain when the columns of *los cuatro generales,* Franco, Mola, Varela and Queipo de Llano, were at the gates of Madrid. So these records, remade in the number of 561 sets, are both music and history; great music and great history.

Two hundred sets, autographed by Paul Robeson, will sell for $5, of which $2.50 is donated by the Music Room to the Veterans of the Lincoln Brigade. The balance sell for $3, of which 50 cents goes to the veterans. For anyone who has a phonograph or can borrow one—for anyone who has the money, this handsome album of *Six Songs for Democracy,* with accompanying text and translation, is a *must.*

ALVAH BESSIE.

Child Prodigy

Teresa Sterne, twelve-year-old pianist, at the Lewisohn Stadium.

MISS TERESA STERNE, twelve-year-old pianist from Brooklyn, was the star performer at the Lewisohn Stadium Concert in New York last week. With the assistance of conductor Alexander Smallens and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Miss Sterne grappled bravely with the intricacies of the prodigious Tchaikovsky concerto in B-flat minor.

Undoubtedly Miss Sterne has a natural flair for the piano, but she can hardly be said to set off any sparks. It is difficult to understand why a piece of such massive proportions was chosen as a vehicle for the talent of the youthful performer. Despite a fine technique of the scale-passage type, an expressive singing tone, and an instinct for musical phrasing, the purely physical demands of the long bravura passages, combined with the exigencies of the more poetic sections, called for more than Miss Sterne could give them. Mr. Smallens' accompaniment could have been greatly reduced, since the large orchestra often overshadowed the soloist, but in one or two places this proved to be a charitable act.

In general, prodigies are apt to be freaks, because, like other people, musical interpreters develop as the horizon of their experiences with the real world broadens. Prodigies, unable to maintain the pace of their sudden start, often gradually fall behind those

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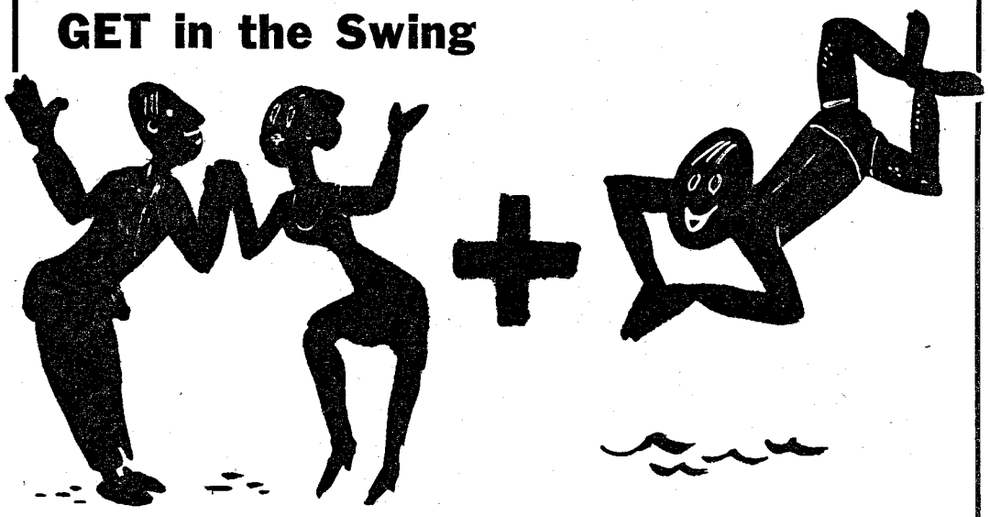

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whose talents develop at a slower but more normal rate. Of course there have been instances where instrumentalists have given highly satisfactory performances at a very tender age. Mozart is said to have been an excellent pianist at the age of six, and there are the contemporary examples of Hoffman and Menuhin. Nevertheless, in more cases prodigies have grown up to be only mediocre artists. If Miss Sterne's sponsors will let her grow up in normal activities and in the company of people her own age, and if she is allowed to see that music is directly related to the understanding of other things in the world, she will definitely become an artist worth watching. LOU COOPER.

"Susan and God"

Joan Crawford as a Buchman Moral Rearmer. Other movies.

JOAN CRAWFORD's new starring vehicle, *Susan and God* (recently opened at the Capitol), follows its Rachel Crothers original much too closely. The original drama, like the film, starts out to be a fairly biting criticism of upper class manners, insofar as they are concerned with the Oxford Movement; ends by sighing nostalgically over the tribulations of the well-to-do. Whatever criticism was implied of the high pressure evangelism that is Buchmanism is so watered down by the time the film is ended that all the sting is taken out of it. Instead we are handed a few ancient homilies: set your own house in order before you go around preaching to others, etc.

Miss Crawford, who has come a long way from the time she won a Charleston contest, cuts loose with what might, under more capable direction than George Cukor's, have been a telling characterization of her Susan. The girl has an arresting personality, there can be no doubt about it. She has learned something about the art and craft of acting, but most of it is applied from the outside, like a veneer. She no longer pops her eyes so effectively (or ineffectively) and she makes positive efforts to get inside her role. It is a juicy one: Susan, the about-to-be-divorcee of an alcoholic husband, who returns from a trip to Europe all hopped up over a new religious movement that bears all the earmarks of the Oxford—a "quiet time," "God-control," giving, sharing, loving, divine guidance, what have you. So engrossed is she in taking care of other people's personal problems that she totally neglects her love-starved child, her drunken husband, and makes herself a complete pain in the neck not only to her wealthy, idle friends, but to a patient audience as well. (This is Mr. Cukor's fault). You expect her husband, Frederic March, to rebel in time, but he never really does. You are hard put to understand what he ever saw in the bird brain in the first place.

All acting honors in the play go to young Rita Quigley, lonely child of this mismated couple. This child has a lot on the ball, may

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GOINGS ON

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go a long way on the screen. Marjorie Main as a housekeeper offers an effective bit part. Frederic March is—well, Frederic March. This man possesses virility and intelligence that have rarely been put to good usage on the screen.

But it was not to be expected that the Hollywood of the producers, where Buchmanism and its latest avatar, Moral Rearmament, have made such inroads that even Mae West had Buchman up to see her, would contribute the sort of criticism such a movement has been aching for.

"MY LOVE CAME BACK"

The comedy of mistaken intentions has been worked to a frazzle, but in the new Warner film, *My Love Came Back,* which stars Olivia DeHavilland and Jeffrey Lynn, some of the freshness and spontaneity of the original idea have been returned to it.

Miss DeHavilland, aspiring musician, accepts a fellowship from a music school, although she does not know that it actually comes out of the pocket of wealthy Julius Malette, the school's president. He is "interested" in her. To conceal his peculations he has the money drawn in the name of another employee of his firm, Tony Baldwin, who later becomes interested in Miss DeHavilland on his own hook. Malette's children get wind of this, think Tony is the culprit. Tony thinks Olivia is sinning with the ancient Malette. You get the idea.

Under Kurt Bernhardt's direction the fable gets off to a slow start, gradually picks up momentum and humorous incident as it moves along. Most of the credit for the humor should go to Charles Winninger's effective handling of the old man Malette. He's a genuine comic, this Winninger, neither overplays nor overmugs. And not only can he extract considerable humor from the man with an evil conscience, but considerable pathos as well.

The whole thing of course is a soap bubble, but the plot is faintly credible and the performances on a level of general competence. Eddie Albert as a young classical musician with a yen for swing has a mobile and amusing face, considerable vitality. I also like his female foil, Jane Wyman, whose pop eyes and baby face can be used effectively to point Albert's better lines. Jeffrey Lynn is a personable hero, nothing more. And the whole will provide a fair enough evening's entertainment.

WORLD'S FAIR DOCUMENTARIES

Those who missed Ralph Steiner's *The City* will find it still playing daily at the World's Fair, in the Little Theater of the Science and Education Building. It goes on at 2:00 and 5:35 p.m. as one item in a series of fourteen documentary programs that will be presented throughout the fair's current season. Other items will include films devoted to youth, housing, industry, food and the consumer, farming, pan-America, national problems, peoples of the earth, and natural sciences.

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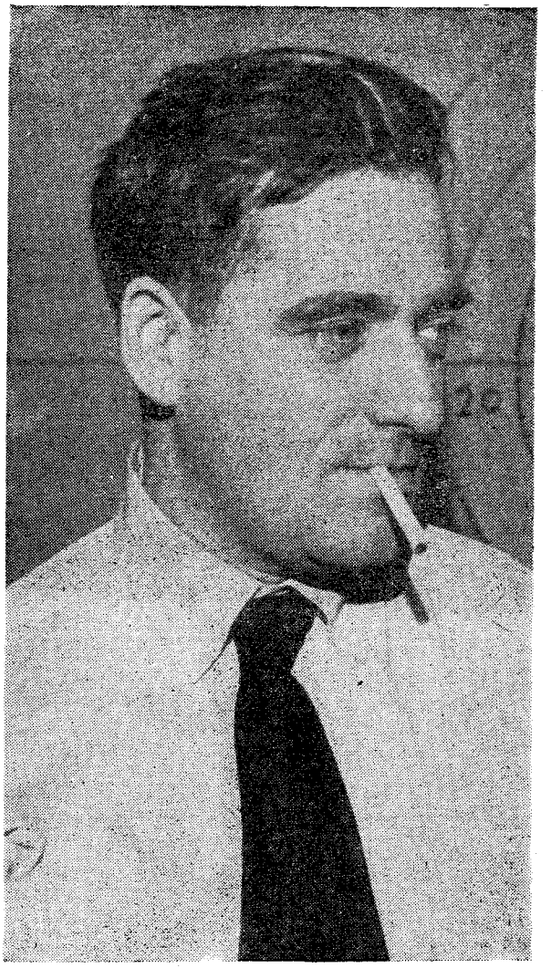

GROPPER

You will come across William Gropper's achievements in the museums, the art galleries. When you do, it's always with the feeling of meeting an old friend—for it was in NEW MASSES that you first met him. Gropper is the great, powerful political cartoonist of our day—the American Daumier. It's an event in our office late Friday afternoons when the messenger brings in Gropper's weekly cartoon. It's an even greater event for our readers to open to his page—every week of the year.

And from Mexico our roving editor has taken a plane for Havana. Joseph North, whose ace reporting gave you the inside track on the Mexican elections, sends us a story on the big hemisphere powwow in Havana. In between lines, Joe promises to let us in on the situation within Cuba itself.

While here at home NEW MASSES has been publishing a series of editorials on national defense, which we dispatched to prominent people in all walks of life. Next week we bring you a symposium in letters: Rockwell Kent, the great American artist, Bruce Crawford, the West Virginia editor, William Pickens, of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, William Carlos Williams, the poet, and Shaemas O'Sheel, American Labor Party leader and author, lead off the discussion. They disagree and agree, dispute particulars as well as fundamentals—here is a vital symposium on America's most vital problem.

In the same issue Joseph Starobin, who recently returned from Canada, concludes a notable series with a definitive article on Canada's wartime trends, a discussion of her new position in the hemisphere and the British empire. Reasons—every one of them better than the other—for following NEW MASSES this week, the next, and fifty-two weeks of the year.

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